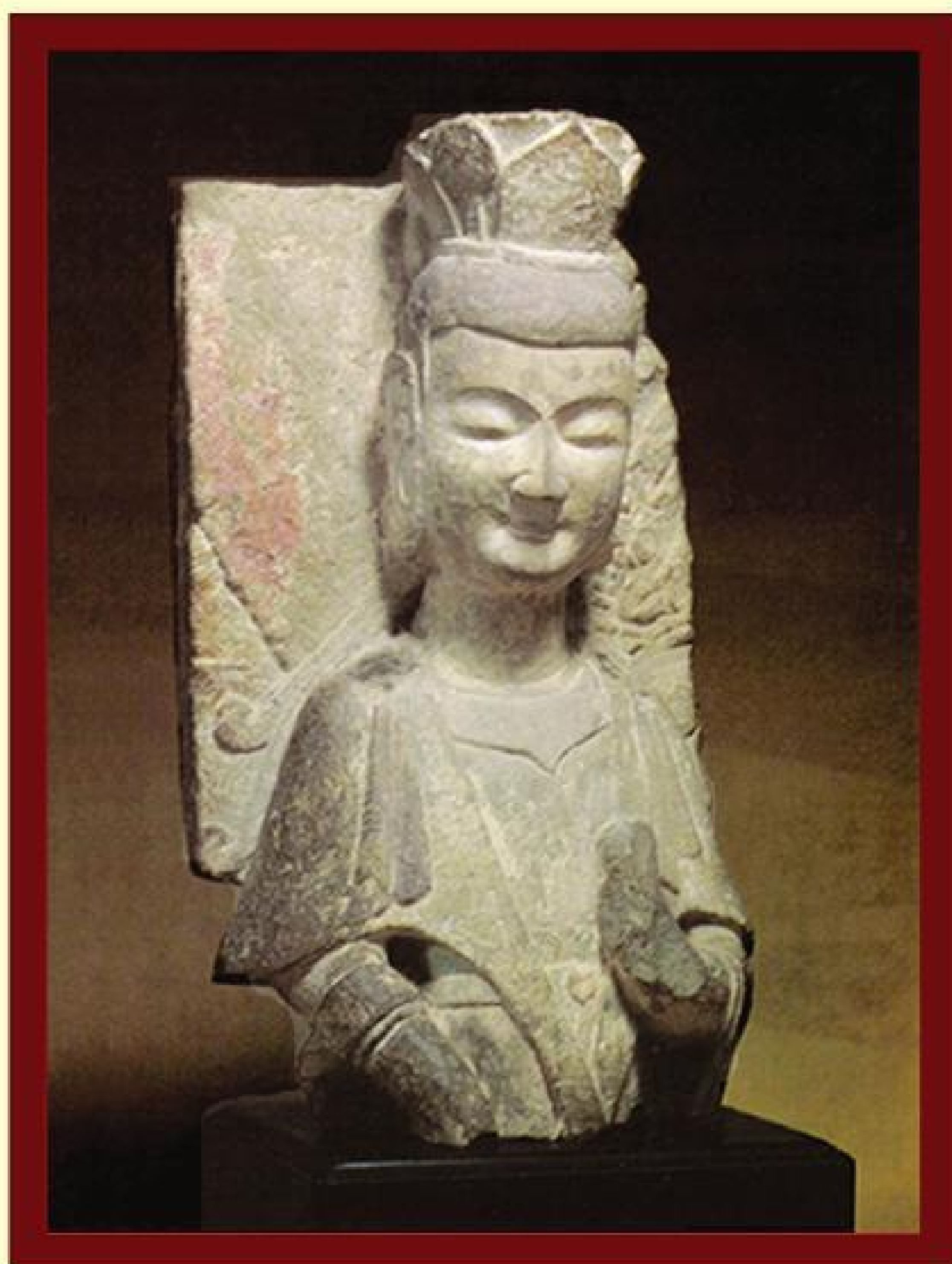
SOTO ZEN ANCESTORS IN CHINA

James Mitchell



The Recorded Teachings of Shitou Xiqian, Yaoshan Weiyan and Yunyan Tansheng

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JAMES MITCHELL

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Ithuriel's Spear
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For friends past and present at San Francisco Zen Center,
and to remember Shunryu Suzuki-roshi,
a Tamer of Untameable Beings.

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Cao-Dong School

The establishment of Soto zen during the 13th century by Dogen Zenji marks not only the beginning of a new school of Buddhism in Japan, but also the decline of its predecessor sect in China, called Cao-Dong School, *(Caodong zong).* When Dogen studied as a young man with the Cao-Dong Master Rujing [Tendō Nyōjō] at Tiantong Temple, he was following a practice tradition which had already existed in China for at least 400 years; one which had always emphasized *zuo chan* [zazen], "sitting zen," as its central practice, but one which had also developed characteristic teachings in relation to the philosophical ideas and methods presented by the other chan sects. Thus the teaching of *mo zhao chan* [mōkushō zen], "silent illumination zen," which Dogen learned from Rujing and accepted as a basis for Soto zen, is a view of zen practice associated with the celebrated 12th-century Cao-Dong master Hongzhi Zhengjue, likely as a reaction to what was viewed as an overemphasis on the study of *gong an*, [kōan] as a means of producing intuitive insight. Although silent illumination zen clearly centers upon the practice of zazen, it is also true that there is no mention of it in the founding period of the Cao-Dong school. In those distant times, other ideas and concerns prevailed.

The primary source of information about the founding of Cao-Dong School, as well as of the other chan schools during the Tang period (600-907 CE), known later collectively as the Five Houses of Chan, are the numerous Song-period (960-1279) chan histories. The first of these that has survived is called *Zu tang ji* (Collection from the Ancestral Hall), which appeared after 952. Arranged according to teaching lineages, all the Song histories present biographies and conversations held between masters and students, and also some occasional information about the origin and activity of the various schools.

These histories agree that Cao-Dong School was founded in the second half of the 9th century by Caoshan Benji (840-901) and his teacher Dongshan Liangjie (807-869), whose first or "mountain" names taken together probably provided the name by which the school became known. Both masters were active in the modern province of Jiangxi in central China. Jiangxi Province and adjacent Hunan Province, both of which lie north of Guangdong Province, where Huineng, the Sixth Patriarch (683-713) lived and taught, formed the heartland for the further development of the Southern School and for the Tang-period in general.

But unfortunately the Song histories don't give us any details about the organization of early Cao-Dong, nor do they tell us anything at all about the meditation practices associated with it. We can guess that the rise of the school derived from the obvious ability of Caoshan and Dongshan to attract students and appoint disciples, and that like the earlier Hongzhou school which formed around the great 8th-century master Mazu, it was due to the organizational efforts of these students and disciples that the sect itself began to spread and attract further students. It may be that neither Caoshan nor Dongshan had the intention to found a new zen school. Although the formation of each of the Five Houses certainly had much to do with creating characteristic methods of responding to koans, each school advancing its own distinctive approach, koan practice as such did not exist in the 9th century. In the absence of further information, we have to view the specific teachings of Caoshan and Dongshan as the real source and origin of Cao-Dong School.

Happily we are well-provided in this respect. The Song histories give extensive coverage to both masters, and in addition there is a separate discourse record in the Chinese Canon entitled *Juizhou Dongshan Liangjie chan shi yu lu* (The Record of Dongshan Liangjie), translated into English by Prof. William Powell. Leaving aside for a moment the question of textual authenticity, these records present many conversations, poems, and discourses of both Cao-Dong founders. In addition to the various statements regarding emptiness, Buddha-nature and thusness, which

conform in every respect to the commonly accepted teachings of all the chan schools, Dongshan also develops the teaching of the Five Ranks, represented in the Song histories as the characterizing philosophical doctrine of the emergent Cao-Dong School.

The Five Ranks of Dongshan are a set of five modes in which apparent or phenomenal reality interacts with ultimate or absolute reality. In traditional Buddhist terms, the teaching demonstrates five possibilities for the construction of form and emptiness. In traditional Chinese terms, the Five Ranks show the interactive relations of *li* (principle) and *shi* (phenomena). The recorded teachings of Caoshan Benji likewise indicate the importance of the Five Ranks in the early years of Cao-Dong School. They contain extensive elaboration, through the systematic use of metaphor and symbol, of Dongshan's original theory.

Before Caoshan and Dongshan

Unique among the different chan teaching traditions in China, Cao-Dong School enjoys the distinction of having had something like a pre-history, extending back 100 years before the time of its official founders, Caoshan and Dongshan. In addition to tracing back a direct lineage to the Sixth Patriarch Huineng by way of the celebrated third-generation master Shitou Xiqian, and emphasizing the two great masters Yaoshan and Yunyan in the succession between Shitou and Dongshan, this recognition that Cao-Dong has its roots firmly planted in the earlier 8th-century chan environment is also strengthened by thematic similarities in the recorded teachings of Dongshan and Shitou Xiqian.

Today, a visitor to Shitou's South Peak Temple *(Nantai si)* at South Mountain *(Hengshan,* or *Nanyue)* in Hunan Province will see a sign inscribed over the main gate announcing that one is entering an ancestor temple of Cao-Dong School. Another example of this 8th-century influence is the circumstance that for centuries in Japan, daily Soto zen ceremonies have included the chanting of *Sandōkai* (The Agreement of Difference and Unity), a translation of Shitou's famous poem *Can tong qi.* The same poem is now chanted in Soto practice centers in Europe and America, providing evidence of a practice tradition extending without interruption almost 1200 years.

Teachings of the chan schools

Insisting on silent meditation as the most direct means of realizing the Buddha's experience of enlightenment, all chan schools in China rejected a formal and systematic study of Buddhist philosophy, derived from the scholastic traditions of India and cultivated especially at the principal Buddhist university-monastery of Nalanda. Instead, a distinctive type of dialogue discourse using statements expressed in metaphor and symbol came into existence during the course of the 8th century.

Personal conversations between students and teachers which seemed to provoke or demonstrate in a meaningful way various insights into dharma truths were transcribed for the benefit of other students. In the late Tang and early Song periods, various of these recorded dialogues were selected and codified into collections of *gong an* [kōan], or "public cases," and, with the publication of additional elaborative commentary also expressed in metaphor and symbol, were by the 12th century used as the main method of instruction in probably all of the chan sects. Indeed, one can distinguish the Five Houses or chan schools during the Song period by the individual techniques developed by each to handle the study of koans. However, production of this discourse declined toward the end of the 13th century in China, the publication of Wumen Hukai's *Wumen kuan* (The Gateless Barrier) being the last major collection of koans with commentary to appear. We can therefore view the chan literature as a closed system of symbolic discourse, originating with the anecdotal teacher-student conversations of the early Tang and ending with the koan collections and commentaries of the late Song, a period lasting roughly six centuries.

Although the original philosophic teachings of Buddhism are seldom mentioned explicitly in this uniquely Chinese discourse, they are nonetheless the substance underlying the statements involving sign and symbol. In other words, they form a meta-

language upon which the discourse itself is based. Far from representing a rejection of traditional Buddhist philosophy, the chan literature is in reality a symbolic expression of it. Almost all chan statements originating with any sect or master point to one of three general Mahayana positions: the theory of emptiness (from the *Prajñā-pāramitā* sutras and the *Mādhyamika* literature); the theory of thusness (or non-duality); and the theory of *tathāgata-garbha*, or "buddha-essence," which has been commonly translated from Chinese into English as "Buddha-mind" or "Buddha-nature."

Emptiness *(śūnyatā)* is the Mahayana Buddhist perception that all phenomena, physical and mental, are impermanent, and that none exist independently of others. However, this is to be understood not simply as a metaphysical statement about reality, but also and more importantly as an object of intuitive awareness: in other words, emptiness is additionally an experience, one which can be realized and actualized through meditation practice.

The term "thusness" *(tathatā)*, often translated as "suchness" in English, appears first in the Prajna-paramita sutras. It refers to the way in which phenomena exist *a priori*, before conceptualizing, or any form of subject-object discrimination, occurs in relation to them. It is the inherent state of apparent reality viewed from the position of emptiness, or ultimate truth. When mental projections stop, phenomena exist in a state of self-identity, or sameness *(samata)*. All things remain just as they are, in their basic condition of oneness or totality, called also non-duality. The term is used in different theoretical contexts by different Indian schools, including the *Mādhyamika, Vijñānavada* and *Yogācāra*, and is mentioned quite often in various of the later tantras. It is likewise a key teaching in *Da sheng qi xin lun* (Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana), a work which appeared around 550 and which had considerable impact on the development of Buddhist thought in China.

The term *tathāgata-garbha*, which I will translate here as Buddha-nature, appeared in a number of Indian *sūtras* and *śāstras* (sutra commentaries) between 250 and 400 CE. It means in Sanskrit either "embryonic Tathagata"—i.e., the Buddha who will appear—

or it means "womb of the Tathagata"—where the Buddha will come from. It refers to the Buddha-essence in all sentient beings, the unrealized potential for enlightenment, which will enable the individual to give birth to Buddhahood. In Chinese, the term was originally translated as *ru lai zang*, but later as *fo xing*, after Chinese philosophical commentaries had begun to elaborate upon the concept, and from the latter we have received the translations "Buddha-mind" or "Buddha-nature" in English.

In the 4th and 5th centuries, tathagata-garbha theory was incorporated into the Yogacara system by its leading theoreticians: Maitreyanatha, Asanga and Vasubandhu. It is a key teaching in the Lankavatara Sutra, which was very influential in the chan movement in the early 8th century, and it achieves especial prominence in the story of the recognition of the Sixth Patriarch's enlightenment, by his master, Hongren. The Indian Mahayana term expresses the idea that all sentient beings have within them the essence of Buddhahood, and thus, by awakening *bodhicitta*, the mind of enlightenment, the ability to develop themselves into Buddhas. The Buddha-essence, the inner potential within everyone, becomes hidden by defilements, which obscure the perception of *dharmakāya*: the essence of the universe, the identity and unity of Buddha with everything that exists.

In chan, the tathagata-garbha concept takes on a dynamic, self-generative aspect: for Shitou Xiqian it is truly the source of all creation. The mirror is a constant metaphor for Buddha-nature; to practice Buddhism is to reveal the "luminous mirror-wisdom" within. Tathagata-garbha is likewise the basis for "the mind is Buddha" teaching of the Southern chan schools in the 8th century, mentioned repeatedly by Shitou and Mazu.

The identity of emptiness, thusness and Buddha-nature

Almost every teacher-student conversation and koan reported in the chan literature between the 7th and 13th centuries can be understood as a representation of one of these three fundamental Mahayana doctrines, expressed in sign, symbol and metaphor. (By separating the original Buddhist teaching of the non-inherent existence of the personal self, later termed *śūnyam svabhāvam* in the Madhyamika formulation, from the more inclusive Mahayana concept of the emptiness of all phenomena, one could then speak of four rather than three fundamental philosophic doctrines articulated in the chan discourse.)

But there exists also an underlying assumption that all three of these positions are identical. Implicit in the chan discourse is the understanding that emptiness, thusness and Buddha-nature, as seen from the standpoint of ultimate or absolute truth, are not only inseparable, but also the same. Therefore the chan master tries to awaken the baffled student by jumping unexpectedly from one position to another. To give two examples from our texts: in the dialogue with Dadian Baotong, Shitou corrects Dadian's false definition of emptiness — "Originally nothing exists" — by showing that if nothing existed, the original face (Buddha-nature) wouldn't exist either. And when Yaoshan tells Yunyan that "six is one and one is six," he means that if all things empty, they are also characterized by thusness (non-duality).

The entire chan discourse can be seen as an apparently endless proliferation of signs pointing to that which can never be signified to begin with, so that for that very reason new signs are continually generated. (This proliferation of signs is called "supplementarity" by the semioticist Jacques Derrida: the compensation through proliferation on the part of a signifier for a signified which can never be made present. One signified gives way to another, functioning in turn as a signifier.) But a part of the tension which

stimulates this ongoing process of symbolic articulation is the switching back and forth from the positions representing emptiness, thusness and Buddha-nature. Paradigmatic in this respect and standing at the very beginning of the chan literature is the famous enlightenment story of Huineng, which led to his recognition as the Sixth Patriarch by Hongren, the Fifth Patriarch in the lineage back to Bodhidharma. Hongren calls upon his students to write a verse expressing his experience of enlightenment. Shenxiu, considered the master's first disciple, writes a poems which expresses tathagata-garbha or Buddha-nature theory, employing the mirror metaphor derived from Indian literature:

> The body is the Bodhi-tree,
> The mind is like a clear mirror.
> At all times we must strive to polish it,
> And must not let the dust collect.

Huineng however responds with a verse composed from the standpoint of emptiness-theory:

> Originally there is no tree of enlightenment,
> Nor is there a stand with a clear mirror.
> From the beginning not one thing exists;
> Where, then, is a grain of dust to cling?

[Both poems are quoted here from Heinrich Dumoulin, *A History of Zen Buddhism*, p. 132. But the Dunhuang manuscripts give a different version of Huineng's famous poems: cf. Yampolsky, *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch*, p. 132, footnote #38.]

Significantly, Hongren says that Huineng's understanding is still not complete—suggesting perhaps that a higher position would be that which equates both theories—but he nonetheless confers the robe of succession to Huineng. It is as if Hongren, faced with the necessity of deciding between sunyata and tathagata-garbha, accepted the former as a superior teaching, but left open the

possibility of a position higher than both, expressible however only by symbol and metaphor, and unapproachable through discursive thought. The alternation between these two positions, along with the further position of thusness,* and the subsequent symbolic elaboration which assumes or incorporates both or all three as the substance of reality, inspire chan discourse through the next six centuries, and the writings of Dogen Zenji in 13th-century Japan as well.

*Several texts from the early Tang-period speak of the fusion of thusness and Buddha-nature. A representative example is the Dunhuang manuscript entitled *Bodhidharma's Treatise on Contemplating Mind,* translated by J.C. Cleary in *Zen Dawn,* pp. 79-102. The origin of this work is unknown, but it could have been composed in Jiangxi or Hunan during Shitou's lifetime. However, equating the Buddhist absolutes (Emptiness=Suchness= Buddha-nature) goes far back into the Indian tradition, as for example in the *Śrīmāladevi Sūtra (The True Lion's Roar of Queen Srimala)*: "World-Honored One, the Tathagata-embryo is the Tathagata's knowledge of emptiness," trans. Garma Chang, *A Treasury of the Mahayana Sutras*, p. 378.

The interaction of principle and phenomena

Cao-Dong School is characterized by two philosophic doctrines which do not clearly emerge elsewhere in the other chan schools of the late Tang and the Song periods. The first of these, the esoteric teaching of the Five Ranks, was created by Dongshan Liangjie and developed by Caoshan Benji. Its popularity and employment as a teaching device seems to have varied enormously from generation to generation—Dogen Zenji seems to have been little impressed with it—but it is reasonable to say that it has always had at the very least a background presence throughout the later history of Cao-Dong School. Indeed the Song-period chan histories agree in emphasizing Dongshan's Five Ranks as the original teaching of the school, and that alone probably would have precluded the possibility of its complete disappearance in later years.

The second characteristic Cao-Dong teaching, namely the interaction or "mutual interpenetration" of *li* and *shi*, principle and phenomena, is of especial relevance to the early Cao-Dong period. It is also included in the *Record of Mazu*, indicating its probable employment in the 8th-century Hongzhou School, descended from Mazu. It is mentioned explicitly in the *Record of Dongshan*, and can be seen as the basis or underlying strategy for the formulation of the Five Ranks, a systematization of how principle and phenomena integrate and act upon each other. Shitou Xiqian, in the fourth generation before Dongshan, emphasized the teaching of *li* and *shi*, and this more than any other single factor has led to the sense of a Cao-Dong pre-history that antedates the actual founding of the sect in the 9th century; that its real roots extend back to the middle of the century preceding; and that Shitou Xiqian must qualify not only as a "Cao-Dong ancestor," but perhaps to some degree as one of the school's unrecognized founders.

Another circumstance that heightens this attitude is the adoption for daily chanting of the two major doctrinal poems of both masters, namely *The Agreement of Difference and Unity* by Shitou and *The Song of the Jewel Mirror Samadhi* by Dongshan, thus conferring a kind of liturgical canonization in the temple ceremonies. Both poems have much in common, and in the Cao-Dong context they complement each other remarkably. They have also been highly regarded by the other chan schools, and they are generally regarded as masterworks of Chinese Buddhist literature in general.

The teaching of the interaction of principle and phenomena comes to Cao-Dong from the Huayan School, one of the most remarkably innovative schools of Chinese Buddhism, which emerged in the 7th century, during the lifetime of Huineng. The school receives its name from *Huayan jing*, the *Avatamsaka sutra*, or Flower Ornament Sutra. Among Mahayana sutras, the Avatamsaka is absolutely unique. It is an enormous work, actually a collection of separate writings which were combined in the late 3rd or early 4th centuries CE, very likely in the forgotten desert kingdoms located in the far southwest of today's China. It presents a panoramic vision of Mahayana Buddhist cosmology, which places Buddha at the center of a universe filled with numberless worlds and world-systems, surrounded by an assembly of buddhas and bodhisattvas who are gifted with all varieties of extraordinary telepathic powers, lost in rapture and fully absorbed in the all-pervading, blazing radiance of the Buddha's samadhi. In addition to this Buddhistic vision of paradise, the final section of the sutra tells the story of the youth Sudhana, who embarks upon a long pilgrimage to receive teachings from fifty different advisors, and thus serves as a model for all seekers following the bodhisattva path.

The Avatamsaka Sutra is not only the most grandiose visionary work in the history of Mahayana Buddhism, but certainly one of the most imaginative and inspired masterworks of religious literature anywhere. Philosophically, it unites the Mahayana teachings of emptiness and thusness and Buddha-nature, and in so doing it

indicates the future of chan. It also identifies the human mind with the physical universe, which is also seen as identical with Buddha. In fact, the Buddha, the mind, sentient beings, and phenomena are one and the same. Seen from the ultimate truth of non-duality, the traditional view of dependent arising receives a suddenly positive meaning, since ignorance is also enlightenment.

The sutra is also full of symbolism expressing universal interdependence, interaction, identity of opposites, and unity within difference, themes which coincided to a considerable extent with pre-Buddhist native philosophic ideas in China. Translated into Chinese by Buddhabhadra around 420 CE, the Avatamsaka Sutra instantly magnetized the interest of Buddhist practitioners and scholars alike, just as it continues to fascinate to this day. In the mid-600's, its study gave birth to the Huayan School, whose founders attempted to explain systematically a series of philosophic ideas which they perceived in the sutra. These ideas aroused widespread and immediate interest in all the contemporary Chinese Buddhist schools, especially in the emerging chan schools. That the chan and Huayan directions seemed more than compatible is demonstrated by the career of the Fifth Patriarch Kueifeng Zongmi (780-841), who was also recognized as a master in the chan school founded by Shenhui and known as Hoze School [Japanese: Katākū]. Zongmi is an important figure of his times for several reasons, and quite obviously he must have considered chan practice as an appropriate consequence of Huayan ideas, derived in turn from the Avatamsaka.

The teaching of the identity and the mutual penetration of principle and phenomena, central to the establishment of Cao-Dong School, was evidently first formulated by Tuxun (557-640), who came to be regarded as the original founder of Huayan School. The early Huayan treatise ascribed without certainty to Tuxun and entitled *Fajie kuan men* (Reflections on the Dharma Realm) explains the relation between *li* (principle) and *shi* (phenomena), and the various modes of interpenetration of both. Because principle, meaning the general truths or principles which govern phenomenal reality, interacts worth phenomena "without mutual obstruction

(*wu ai*), both principle and phenomena are able to enter into or penetrate each other; to include, incorporate and fuse with each other, without either losing its respective identity.

This conception receives further elaboration in the writings of Fazang (643-712), who mentions the teaching in the introduction to his commentary on *Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana*. Fazang was known later as Huayan sect's third patriarch, after he had developed the "golden lion" comparison, which became instantly popular. The statue of the lion represents its phenomenal existence, but the gold of which it is made is its principle, which is itself formless, but for that reason can adopt any form which is required. Because every part of the lion is made of gold, principle is necessarily present in each of the parts: the whole is identical with its parts, and vice versa. Consequently all phenomena manifest one principle, and this one principle achieves its expression in the world of phenomena.

If in Buddhist terms we equate principle with emptiness, which of course is the one quality that characterizes all phenomena, then emptiness is therefore form, and form is emptiness. Emptiness is for this reason "the spiritual source" (Shitou Xiqian) of phenomenal existence. This spiritual source is also identified, in the Huayan tradition, not only with *dharmadhātu*, the true "dharma realm" invisibly permeating all things, but also with tathagata-garbha. Phenomenal existence is now seen as the one mind and body of the Buddha. Just as the theories of emptiness, thusness and Buddha-nature are unified in Huayan thinking, they are continually integrated in the language of sign and symbol employed by the great chan masters.

The background of Chinese philosophy

Rather much has been made by Western scholars of the apparent ability of the Chinese to syncretize the traditional doctrines of Buddhism, thus reconciling doctrinal viewpoints and differences which had remained very distinct in the minds of many teachers in India. But in fact the desire to harmonize and unify the basic beliefs of Mahayana doctrine was also a constant tendency in Indian scholasticism. Tathagata-garbha theory never became the basis for a separate doctrinal school, but it was easily incorporated into the Yogacara system, as was also the theory of thusness or non-duality. Then came the sudden rise to popularity of tantra or esoteric Buddhism in the 6th and 7th centuries, the explication and codification of which must have required a large number of scholars, leaving the further development of scholastic philosophy in India more or less suspended. The influence of tantra was so pervasive that we must look to Tibetan rather than to Chinese Buddhism to gain some impression of what mainstream Buddhism was probably like in India before its extinction.

Nor should we think that Buddhism somehow fit peacefully and without controversy into the native Chinese philosophical landscape. Far from it. Taoists, Confucianists and Buddhists attacked each other constantly and vied with one another to obtain imperial favor for their sects, seldom resisting the desire to denigrate the philosophical substance of the opposing sects in the process. Monk Zhiban's *Fo zu tung ji*, a chronicle history of Buddhism from 581-960 written from a Tiantai standpoint, reports of the endless controversies among the sects, and it quotes for example the great 7th-century translator Xuanzang as saying, "There are

great differences between the teachings of Buddha and those of Lao-tse. It is impossible to explain the meaning of Lao-tse in Buddhistic terms. Moreover, the fundamental meaning of Lao-tse is very shallow." [From Jan Yuen-Hua, *A Chronicle History of Buddhism in China 581-960 AD*: Translations from Monk Chih-p'an's *Fo-tsu T'ung-chi*, p. 34.]

But there was one element of native Chinese thought which was never distant from Buddhist literature in the Tang period, and which had exceptional influence on the Cao-Dong ancestors, namely the correlative cosmological concept of yin and yang. As categories of cosmic order underlying all phenomena, yin and yang provide a conceptual basis for perceiving reality in a dualistic framework. All phenomena are caused by the interaction of two polar opposite forces, which permeate each other in limitless configurations, and account for our experience of life as a vastly variable world of changing circumstances and situations.

One of the Five Classics, *I Jing* (Book of Changes) is a system of divination based on the permutations of *yin* and *yang*, examining present tendencies toward change as represented through the use of six-line combinations of broken and unbroken lines, called hexagrams. Dongshan Liangjie refers expressly to this work in his famous poem, *Baojing sanmei ke* (Song of the Jewel Mirror Samadhi), a core-text of Cao-Dong: "It is like the six lines of the double split hexagram; the relative and absolute integrate—piled up, they make the three; the complete transformation makes five." Indeed, Dongshan's teaching of the Five Ranks can also be understood as a diagrammatic explanation of the interaction between yin and yang, transposed into a Buddhist context.

Shitou Xiqian also refers repeatedly to the interplay of opposing forces: principle and phenomena, light and dark, forward and backward, near and far, sage and commoner, etc. Any of these pairs of opposites can be seem as deriving from the Chinese metaphysical notion of two correlative opposing forces underlying the dynamic of creation. Chan Buddhism attempts to present, experientially through the practice of meditation and symbolically through its recorded teachings, a reconciliation of all antinomies or opposites,

and the instructions of the chan masters of all epics continually thematicize this process of resolution. Posed as a problem of logic, the opposites are resolved through the realization of thusness, or non-duality. As a metaphysical topic, they are all united by the insight that emptiness is constituted by means of form, and form itself is an expression of the same emptiness. Much of the koan literature is generated by the sudden awakening of a student to these perceptions, and the centuries-old Chinese traditional teaching of *yin* and *yang* serves as an insistent subtext. It is a tacit, consensual substruction which unites Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, just as the acceptance of reincarnation and the practice of yoga as a means towards liberation (*moksa*) characterize the diverse Hindu, Jain and Buddhist traditions of India.

It should be remembered too that the early Cao-Dong masters were very familiar with the Chinese classical literature. They were well-read in the Buddhist sutras and commentary, would have studied such basic texts as Sengzhao and *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana,* and must have thought earnestly and often about the new Huayan ideas popular in the early Tang. Achieving this degree of proficiency in Buddhist theory must have necessitated some knowledge of the Confucianist *Five Classics,* the study of which served as a curriculum for the education of young scholars, as well as for any common definition of literacy in Tang times. It seems obvious as well that both Shitou and Dongshan knew their way around Taoist literature—it is thought by some that Shitou's poem *The Agreement of Difference and Unity* is named after *Zhao Lun*, a classic Taoist work. At the same time, both teachers were certainly very practical men, who were clearly convinced of the importance of intuitive realization through sitting meditation as the best means to approach Buddhist truth, requiring neither scholarship nor philosophic study, or for that matter even the ability to read or write, and therefore accessible to everyone.

Textual sources

Our knowledge of chan during the Tang period, with the significant exception of a number of manuscripts found at Dunhuang dating back to the early 9th century, comes mainly from the numerous histories of the chan sects which appeared in sequence from the mid 10th-century until about 1300, and which thus were compiled considerably later than the events which they describe. The biographies and recorded teachings of Shitou, Yaoshan and Yunyan are translated here in their entirety from *Wu deng hui yuan* (Five Lamps Merged in the Source), compiled by the monks Pu Ji and Hui Ming. This work, first published in 1253, is the most comprehensive of the traditional chan histories; it combines material found in five earlier "transmission of the lamp" histories *(chuan deng shi)* and also adds new material.

To learn more about Shitou's life and teachings, we have also included some additional stories from *Zu tang ji* (Collection from the Hall of Ancestors), which appeared in 952, and further stories of Shitou taken from the records of different of his disciples, also found in *Wu deng hui yuan*, or in *Jingde chuan deng lu* (Transmission of the Lamp from the Jingde Era), published in 1004. It is clear that some major differences can be seen in the Song histories, not only in terms of the material included, but also in terms of literary style, and thereby probably the intended readership. A good example appears in the *Zu tang ji* version of Shitou's youth, compared with the account in *Wu deng hui yuan*. The former, with its usual emphasis on folk Buddhist elements, presents a somewhat miraculous account of Shitou's birth, which is omitted altogether in the more scholarly *Wu deng hui yuan*.

How can we be sure that what we are reading is the real teaching of these chan masters of early Tang? Obviously we can't. In future decades it is likely that Chinese scholarship, through textual comparison and linguistic analysis, will be much better enabled to decide issues of historic authenticity. In the meantime, it seems fair to suggest that some parts of the Song histories provide us with reasonably accurate representations of what these masters originally thought and taught. Despite the constant temptation for later editors to revise or omit, interpret or interpolate, there must have been also operative a conservative tendency to pass along the truth as true to the original as possible, even when issues of sectarian privilege or lineage were involved. Another point worth remembering is that from the standpoint of Buddhist practice, it makes little difference if the texts are genuine or not. It is certainly more significant that generations of zen Buddhists in China, Korea and Japan have, for about a thousand years, accepted the Song records as "gospel" and have used their teachings as models for their own practice.

Chan history from 700 to 850

The discovery of the Dunhuang manuscripts revealed another important source for information about the chan movement during the lifetimes of Shitou, Yaoshan and Yunyan, in the form of a chan history written by the Fifth Huayan Patriarch Zongmi (780-841), which provides an overview of the different schools existing in his lifetime. Written from his own sectarian viewpoint—Zongmi was a recognized master in both the Huayan and Hoze chan traditions—it shows that there was no single teaching or meditation practice common to all the chan sects, but that each sect had its own traditional doctrinal orientation and teaching methods, and also that each was located in a different region of China. Zongmi mentions seven different chan schools: Niutou, the Northern, the school of Lao An, two schools in Sichuan, Hongzhou (school of Nanyue Huaizhang), and Hoze, Shenhui's school of southern chan, to which Zongmi himself belonged.

The Niutou or Ox-head school, which evidently remained quite unaffected by the controversy between the Northern and Southern schools, was located south of Nanjing (in modern Jiangsu Province). It claimed a separate lineage to Daoxin, the Fourth Patriarch, and was much influenced by Tiantai teachings. It did not survive beyond the 9th century. The Northern school emerged as a separate tradition only after being vigorously opposed by Shenhui (670-762), the polemicist of the Southern school, and his followers. It was centered around the ancient Tang capital cities of Changan and Loyang, and claimed direct descent from the Fifth Patriarch Hongren by way of his disciple Faju (638-689), who lived for sixteen years in Hongren's East Mountain community. Faju received Dharma transmission from Hongren, and eventually he came to be regarded by many as the founder of

the Northern school. However, the most celebrated master of this school was Shenxiu, who died in 706. Like Faju, he also received Dharma transmission from the Fifth Patriarch at East Mountain, and sought to establish chan meditation practice based on the Mahayana sutras, which he studied deeply throughout his long career. But the Northern school, which initially was considered to be the most important chan lineage in the early Tang, and which enjoyed thereby the patronage of two Tang emperors, was also doomed to extinction by the beginning of the 9th century, due probably to divisions in leadership in the years after Shenxiu's death.

The Southern School came into existence through the efforts of Shenhui, a disciple of Huineng, but who had also practiced meditation with Shenxiu briefly in 699-701. At a "Great Dharma Assembly" held on January 15th, 732, at a temple in a place called Huatai in Hunan Province, Shenhui announced that the unbroken succession of Dharma transmission from Bodhidharma had been passed from Hongren to the Sixth Patriarch, Huineng. In addition to accusing the Northern School of having quite literally usurped the chan patriarchate, Shenhui accused it further of having produced a false teaching, namely that enlightenment occurs through gradual practice, whereas Huineng had taught that enlightenment occurs "at a single stroke," as a sudden breakthrough.

The often acrimonious debate between Southern and Northern schools was known to everyone active in the chan movement of the 8th century and went on for several decades, with teachers in Jiangxi and Hunan wasting no time in allying themselves with *zu shi chan*, the "chan of the patriarchs," as the followers of Huineng later termed it. Central to this movement was the rising popularity of *Liu zu tan jing* (The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch), which was held to be an accurate record of Huineng's teachings, but whose derivation is in fact questionable, and which may have been written, at least partially, much later by Shenhui's disciples. Shitou Xiqian's poem *The Agreement of Difference and Unity* provides several direct references to the Platform Sutra, possibly as a convenient means of demonstrating Shitou's allegiance to the still-nascent Southern School.

For Zongmi, writing at the beginning of the ninth century, the Southern school was best represented by the Hoze school, of which he himself was the recognized leader. The Hoze school was founded by Shenhui, but did not survive beyond Zongmi's own life time. More significantly for the future course of events, Zongmi speaks in some detail of a second Southern school, which he calls the Hongzhou school, established by the disciples of Mazu in Jiangxi. Since Zongmi does not note the existence of a second Southern school in the succession from Shitou Xiqian, it is to the Song period chan histories we must look for information about the gradual emergence of the Cao-Dong teaching lineage, and its counterpart in the establishment of *Linji* [Rinzai] school, both of which replaced all other chan schools by the end of the Song dynasty.

What was the day-to-day life of a chan monk like around the year 800? The Song histories and imperial records provide us with some clues. In Jiangxi and Hunan, where the Southern school or "chan of the patriarchs" was fully established, there must have been a few thousand serious chan monks studying at a variety of temples and monasteries located in the remote rural regions and led by a few dozen celebrated masters. The monks would live and work at different temples and then move on after a period of time to receive teachings from another master. They worked in the fields and forests surrounding the monastery, performed kitchen and housekeeping or administrative duties inside the monastery, and devoted themselves otherwise to the daily routine of meditation, ceremonies and lectures. Monastic activity was codified and regulated by Baizhang Huaihai (720-814), a famous teacher in the lineage of Mazu, whose reforms had the effect of supplanting a strict observation of the Vinaya rules, a new trend clearly noted at the very beginning of the recorded teachings of Yaoshan.

The chan monastery itself was typically divided into separate buildings—a Dharma hall for lectures and possibly for housing sutra texts, a Buddha hall for ceremonies, and a monks' hall for meditation, where the monks also ate and slept and sometimes heard lectures. The buildings were often located in a row, one

after another, leading up the side of a hill or mountain, the whole area surrounded by a high wall. It is unfortunate that no contemporary records exist to tell us more about the actual meditation practice of the Tang monks. About all we know is that the numerous meditation methods described in the Hinayana scriptures were a subject of considerable experimentation in many monasteries in the early Tang, and that the term sitting meditation *(zuo chan)*, although nowhere described in detail, did at least exist in the vocabulary of chan by the 8th century, and is specifically mentioned without comment in Huineng's Platform Sutra. The monks heard lectures of Buddhist doctrine and philosophy, as indicated for example by Yaoshan's comment that the monks have teachers "to teach them sutras and Abidhamma."

We should not conclude that the growing chan monasteries, becoming increasingly organized and regulated in the mid- and late-Tang, were populated exclusively by serious students and dedicated practitioners. Many, maybe most of the monks were likely illiterate, many were escaping from the labors and hardships of a peasant's existence, or from forced conscription into the army, from anticipated prosecution for criminal activities, or simply from homelessness. In any event, the monasteries would have harbored quite a wide variety of individual interests and abilities. Perhaps Shitou refers to a more dubious aspect of Chinese monastic life when he asks Dadian Baotong, "Are you the kind of monk who studies Buddhism seriously, or are you the kind of monk who just hangs around all day?"

This period would have known a constant growth of monastic life and rapid expansion of interest in chan theory and practice, increasingly stabilized in and through the lineage of Huineng. The "golden age of chan" came to an abrupt end with the persecution of Buddhism instigated by the Emperor Wuzong in the years 841-846. Animosity towards Buddhism as a foreign religion imported from India had always existed in China, not only on the part of Taoists, but especially by Confucian scholars and officials who ran the imperial and provincial governments, and who undoubtedly saw their influence and the Confucianist cult of the state threatened

by the sudden upsurge of interest in Buddhism, as well as by the unprecedented prosperity of the monasteries. Wuzong himself was an ardent Taoist, determined to drive Buddhism from China.

But ideology was not the only determining factor for the "great persecution:" economic reasons were also of primary importance. The Buddhist monasteries had accumulated wealth in the form of extensive land-holdings in the countryside, and the income which these produced was tax-exempt. The growing population of monks signified for the imperial government a corresponding reduction in agricultural productivity: one more monk meant one less farmer, or one less soldier in the imperial armies, an important consideration in an agrarian country with an organized national government whose borders were under constant attack by hostile forces emerging from nomadic societies. It is no wonder that Tang government administrators were anxious to control the steadily growing numbers of professional monks, fearing perhaps the kind of development which was to occur later in Tibet, where eventually more than 30% of the adult male population lived within monastic walls.

The year 846 marked a watershed in the development of Buddhism in China. One obvious result was the emergence of the chan movement and Jingtu (Pure Land) as the dominant schools of Buddhism, while virtually all other sects went into rapid decline. The persecution under Wuzong must have dampened whatever contemporary hopes may have existed for the establishment of Buddhism as the official state religion of the empire, and it enforced the realization that Buddhism could flourish only by the will of the state. As so often happens in cultural history during periods of political upheaval, new forms of social organization and religious practice quickly developed. For the chan movement, these resulted in the gradual establishment of the Five Houses and the creation of new forms of chan literature during the following Song period, of which the translations included in the present work may also be seen as representative.

Shitou Xiqian

Shitou Xiqian was born in the year 700 in the north of modern Guangdong Province, not far from Caoxi, where the Sixth Patriarch Huineng lived and taught, and where it is recorded that Shitou was present at his death in 713. In 728, Shitou was ordained as a monk in Lofu Shan, also in Guangdong. He then studied with Qingyuan Xingsi (660-740) at Chizhou in modern Jiangxi Province and received Dharma transmission from him, thus becoming a third generation master in the lineage descending from Huineng. In 742, Shitou moved to South Mountain in Hunan, which is called Hengshan or Nanyue in Chinese, where he probably remained until his death in 790.

Shitou had many students and disciples during the latter part of his career, and three of the Five Houses are descended from him, namely the Cao-Dong, Yunmen and Fayan schools. Shitou's great contemporary in Jiangxi was Mazu (709-788), regarded by historians as the most influential chan master of the 8th century, who also studied at South Mountain, under the master Nanyue Huaizhang (677-744). From Mazu the two remaining Five Houses originated: *Linji* [Rinzai] and *Kuiyang* [Igyō]. According to the Song chronicles, Shitou and Mazu both knew and respected each other, sent students back and forth, and apparently also enjoyed teasing each other from time to time.

South Mountain has been known traditionally as one of the Five Holy Buddhist Mountains of China, the others being Wutai Shan in Shanxi, Putuo Shan in Zhejiang, Emei Shan in Sichuan, and Song Shan in Henan. According to one legend, Bodhidharma stopped at South Mountain for a visit on his way from India, and

Shitou's South Peak Temple itself was reportedly founded in the late 6th or early 7th-century. In modern times, the temple was destroyed during the Cultural Revolution and rebuilt in 1981-82, with support from Soto Zenshu in Japan. In 1991, it housed a small sangha of about 80 monks and nuns, led by Ven. Shi Bao Tan, abbot of the temple. Visitors are welcome and are shown the large rock upon which Shitou constructed his meditation hut. It sits on a ledge about 30 meters long, has a flat surface, and directly overlooks the northeastern side of the temple. When Shitou arrived at South Mountain, he built himself a meditation hut on top of this rock, and thus became known as Shitou Heshang, the "Stone Monk."

South Mountain is actually the name given to several forested hills and valleys west of Nanyue township. The area has always been known more for its Taoist than Buddhist temples, also in Shitou's time, and the large Taoist temple called Da Miao today attracts most of the tourist attention. South Mountain was also the location of a Confucianist academy or university, one of the few such institutions in China. In Shitou's time, the area would have had only a small number of Buddhist and Taoist temples, and there may have been a few hundred monks and priests of both religions living and meditating in seclusion on the mountainsides. The environment must have provided some fairly intense philosophical discussions.

The Jian Xiang pagoda, erected as a memorial tower after Shitou's death, was in 1991 a pile of rubble, overgrown by bushes and thorns. It lies about half a kilometer down the side of the mountain from South Peak Temple, just inside a Chinese military reservation, used in recent decades as a missile base. Shitou's body was mummified in black lacquer. Much damaged by fire, it was brought to Japan during the time of the Chinese Revolution (1911), and it may be viewed today at the Soto zen temple of Soji-ji in Yokohama. (For further information concerning Shitou's remains, see Bernard Faure, *The Rhetoric of Immediacy: A Cultural Critique of Zen*, pp. 167-168, with illustration.)

The Teachings of Shitou Xiqian

Shitou's teachings are seen in two sources: the biography and recorded sayings from the Song histories, and two long discursive poems which summarize his distinctive approach to chan practice. The numerous conversations with his students focus thematically on statements of emptiness, thusness (non-duality), and Buddha-nature (tathagata-garbha) theory. They conform generally to the mainstream chan literature disseminated during the Song period. The numerous references to Huineng and his temple in Caoxi indicate a strong intention to conform to the lineage of the Southern School, which was in the process of establishing itself as the dominant chan movement during Shitou's lifetime. Repeated references to sutra study and mention of a work by the 5th-century Chinese dialectician Sengzhao show that Shitou had a strong knowledge of Buddhist literature and philosophy. Of great importance is Shitou's lengthy acknowledgment of "the mind is Buddha" teaching, which was also popular with other chan masters in the 8th century, being mentioned in the *Record of Mazu* as well as in the Platform Sutra. A direct statement of Buddha-nature theory, it identifies the human mind in its pristine or undefiled state as synonymous with the enlightened mind of Buddha.

Two longer poems attributed to Shitou present new perspectives to our understanding of his personality and career as a chan master. In the *Grass Shack Song* we see him newly arrived on South Mountain, living in the meditation hut he built for himself on top of a large flat rock. The poem is actually a restatement in Buddhist terms of a Taoist archetype, namely that of the hermit or "mountain sage" who has forsaken the conflicts and business of social existence to pursue a spiritual path. This is a common topos

in Tang-period poetry, translated in this case to the realization of the universal Buddha-nature. The possibility of solitary meditation in a mountain wilderness seems to have largely disappeared with the gradual establishment of the chan monasteries and the increasing regimentation of monastic life, so we might think that the monks of the Song period may have looked back nostalgically to a more individualistic era. In any event, the poem's obvious enthusiasm for a do-it-yourself Buddhist lifestyle is, with the exception of Han Shan's Cold Mountain poems, quite unique in Buddhist literature, and also confirms the Sixth Patriarch's position that the real teacher resides within the individual mind and not necessarily within the walls of a monastery.

Shitou's other great poem, *The Agreement of Difference and Unity*, presents the teaching of *li* and *shi*, principle and phenomena, which originated in its Buddhist form with the masters of the Huayan school. Phenomena emerge from principle, the spiritual source, and are inseparable from it. One and many exist in a state of agreement, since neither may arise without the other. All creation derives from the interaction of principle with phenomena. In their interaction, not only the dual, polar forces of cosmic creation, but also all conceptual opposites are reconciled. Tacit to this conception is the assumption that, in traditional Buddhist terms, emptiness may be substituted for principle: since all phenomena are characterized by their emptiness or lack of substantial reality, and because emptiness is not cognizable apart from phenomenal existence, no inherent opposition can exist between them, or indeed between any other pair of conceptual opposites, since both sides are empty to begin with. Thus samsara and nirvana are one, and accordingly the worlds of enlightenment and non-enlightenment. Also tacit, in the context of Buddhist practice, is the conviction that the agreement of difference and unity may be intuitively experienced through the process of meditation.

Seen historically, Shitou's poem is an expression of allegiance to the Southern School, which became established almost exactly within his lifetime as the dominant school of chan. The poem opens with the lines, "The mind of India's great sage was quietly

confided from west to east." We know that the idea of a direct mind-to-mind transmission between master and student was not a basic issue in chan teachings until Shenhui made it so by attacking the legitimacy of Shenxiu's dharma lineage, replacing it with the allegedly authentic transmission from Hongren to Huineng. This was clearly the core of Shenhui's attempt to discredit the Northern School; subsequently the belief in a direct mind-to-mind transmission from Sakyamuni Buddha downwards, not based in other words on just the written teachings of Buddha, became an inevitable and essential belief of the chan school, as ultimately and extensively documented in the "transmission of the lamp" chronicles of the Song period.

Shitou quotes the Platform Sutra directly when he states that in the Path (i.e., from the standpoint of ultimate truth), no differences exist between Southern or Northern ancestors. Numerous other obvious references to the Platform Sutra exist in *The Agreement of Difference and Unity* and are listed here on p. 82ff. If it is true that parts, if not all of the Platform Sutra originated not with Huineng, but with the disciples of Shenhui during the time of Shitou's teaching career, it is certainly possible that Shitou, who with Mazu had a very large following of students and disciples, may have played a significant part in helping the Southern School achieve its prominence. In any event, *The Agreement of Difference and Unity* clearly indicates a strong desire to conform to the newly emerging teaching tradition.

Yaoshan and Yunyan

Yaoshan Weiyan (751-834) was born in Jiangzhou, now in Shanxi Province. Growing impatient with a strict observance of the Vinaya rules as a method of gaining enlightenment, he approached Shitou Xiqian for guidance, who sent him off to study with Mazu. No separate record of Yaoshan's teachings exists, and what little we know of his biography is found only in the recorded conversations with his students. These are however among the most popular in zen history, commented upon by successive generations of teachers in China and Japan.

Yaoshan's celebrated successor was Yunyan Tansheng (780-841), the teacher of Dongshan Liangjie. After becoming a monk at the age of 16, he went to Shimen Shan in Hongzhou to study with Mazu's disciple Baizhang Huaihai. After 20 years with Baizhang, Yunyan went to Lizhou to practice with Yaoshan, who seems from the recorded conversations to be insatiably curious about Baizhang's teaching style. Eventually leaving Yaoshan, Yunyan withdrew to a stone cave on Yunyan Shan—Cloud Crag Mountain—not far from modern Chang Sha in Hunan Province.

The teachings of Yaoshan and Yunyan as reported in the Song histories convey the commonly accepted doctrines of emptiness, thusness, and Buddha-nature. There it is mentioned also that Dongshan's teaching of the Five Ranks was obtained from Yunyan. This is by no means implausible, since graphic or symbolic representations of the modes of interaction between absolute and relative have a long history in China, and the impulse to translate this into Buddhist terms arose long before Dongshan. Yunyan's dates (780-841) correspond exactly to those of the Huayan patriarch Zongmi, who also defined and developed graphical representations of five stages of phenomenal evolution, which he organized in the context of Huayan philosophies.

Translations

The Record of Shitou Xiqian

Master Shitou Xiqian of South Mountain was born in Duanzhou, Gao Yao County [in modern Guangdong Province]. **His family name was Chen. His mother became a vegetarian before he was born. When Shitou was just a small child, he showed such self-restraint that he never caused any trouble to his nurses. At 20, people regarded him as reliable, since he always kept his promises. The local people in his home country were afraid of ghosts and often held sacrifices to appease the spirits. It became a custom in the area to sacrifice cows during the rituals. Shitou would go and upset their rituals and take the cows away. He ran off with several dozen each year. Even the elders of the village could not deter him from these cattle thefts. Later, Shitou went directly to Cao Xi** [Huineng, the Sixth Patriarch] **and became an informal student. After Huineng's death and following his wishes, Shitou went to see Qingyuan and became his student.**

One day, Qingyuan said to Shitou, "Some people say there is news from Lingnan." Shitou responded, "Some people say there is no news from Lingnan." Qingyuan asked, "If that's so, where do the *Da zang* and *Xiao zang* scriptures come from?" Shitou answered, "They are all present right here and now." Qingyuan agreed.

Lingnan is a historical name for the area south of Hunan Province, today included in Guangdong Province. *Da zang* and *Xiao zang* are the larger and smaller collections of Buddhist scriptures. The Chinese Canon, first edited in 515 CE under Emperor Xiao Yan of the Liang Dynasty, is called *Da zang jing* in

Chinese. The sense of the story is this: Shitou has been studying in the South, in Lingnan. Qingyuan asks what kind of scriptural knowledge he acquired there. Shitou says none at all: ultimate truth is found only in the present moment.

Shitou moved to South Peak Temple on South Mountain in the early Tian Bao years of the Tang Dynasty. He built a hut to the east of the temple on a big stone which looked like a platform. Thereafter he called himself Shitou Heshang, which means "Stone Monk."

South Mountain, or Hengshan in Chinese, is the name given to several forested hills and valleys west of Nanyue township in the south of Hunan Province. The area has always been famous for its Taoist and Buddhist temples, and solitary hermits living on the sides of the mountains. South Mountain was also the location of a Confucianist academy or university, one of the few such institutions in China. Shitou came here probably sometime after 720 CE, built himself a meditation hut on a flat rock next to Nan tai si, South Peak Temple. The temple still exists today, as does the rock where Shitou meditated and after which he named himself — (see photo on back cover).

He set out to teach his students. "The key point of my teaching comes from Buddha. We concentrate on actualizing Buddha's insight, not on making progress in meditation. The mind is the Buddha. Buddha and common people, enlightenment and delusion have different names, but they have the same origin. You've got to study your minds first! Human nature in itself is neither good nor bad. Sages and common people have the same complete nature. There isn't some special way to apply this theory to reality. Your own mind reflects the entire world. Flowing water doesn't have some beginning or ending, nor the changing moon, nor the moon's reflection on the water. If you understand this, you have all that is necessary."

"The mind is Buddha" is a central teaching in early chan, ascribed in more than one source to Daoxin, the Fourth Patriarch. It does not mean that the human mind and the mind of Buddha are identical, or that Buddha-nature (Buddha-mind) is locatable inside the human mind, but rather that the human mind in its original and essential state is itself Buddha-nature. This teaching was strongly identified with Mazu, Shitou's great contemporary, and is therefore mentioned several times in the *Record of Mazu*. For example, a chan master approaches Mazu and says, "I've heard a lot about the chan teaching, 'the mind is the Buddha,' but I don't get it." Mazu replied, "Exactly the mind that doesn't understand–that's it! There isn't anything else." In the biography of the Sixth Patriarch in *Jingde chuan deng lu*, Huineng says: "Your own mind is the Buddha. Don't be suspicious like a fox. Nothing can be established outside your mind. You are the original mind which produces everything."

At that time, his student Daowu asked, "Who understands the teachings of Cao Xi?" Shitou answered, "He who understands the teachings of Buddha." Daowu asked, "Have you got it?" Shitou said no. "Why not?" Shitou: "Because I don't understand Buddhist teachings." [Buddha's teachings are not to be understood through conventional understanding.] **Daowu: "How then can I be free?" Shitou: "Who's holding you captive?" Daowu: How can I get to the Pure Land?" Shitou: "Who's making you impure?" Daowu: "What is Nirvana?" Shitou: "Who is it that places you in birth-and-death?"**

In the words of the Vimalakirti Sutra: "Liberation can be found where there is bondage, but where there is ultimately no bondage, where is there need for liberation?" — *The Holy Teaching of Vimalakirti*, trans. Robert A. F. Thurman, p. 76. The foregoing dialogue appears frequently in the Song-period chan histories, repeated in similar terms by different masters. It expresses the idea

of original enlightenment, since only the conventional or relative mind sees enlightenment as something opposed or exterior to itself.

A student asked, 'What is the meaning of the coming from the west?" Shitou answered, "Go and ask a stone pillar." The student said, "I'm only a student, I don't understand." Shitou said, "I don't either."

Dadian said, "People in ancient times said that it is wrong to believe in the Path and wrong not to believe in the Path. Would you explain this to me?" Shitou said, "There is nothing right or wrong, so what is there to explain?" Then Shitou asked, "Can you talk about the future without using your throat and lips?" Dadian said no. Shitou said, "In that case you can be my student."

Daowu asked, "What is the basic principle of Buddhism?" Shitou said, "You already have it." Daowu asked, "Is there a turning point upward?" [Is there a way to understand this further?] **Shitou replied, "White clouds pass freely through the sky."** [Against a blue sky of emptiness, phenomena pass without obstruction.] **Daowu asked, "What is chan?" Shitou said, "This rock." "What is the Path?" "That piece of wood."**

One day Shitou was reading a book called *Zhao Lun*, which states that only a sage can incorporate the world into himself. Shitou was sitting at his desk and said, "The sages never think about themselves, and yet they contain everything inside them. Buddha can't be seen, but who says he has to come from somewhere? If you have the mind of enlightenment, the whole world reveals itself inside you. People's perception varies, so some will say 'come' while others say 'go.'"

Zhao Lun is a book of philosophical treatises, much influenced by Madhyamika dialectics, written by Sengzhao (384-414 CE), a disciple of Kumarajiva. It was an enormously popular and influential work in the early period of chan.

Next he put the book aside and fell asleep. He dreamed that he was travelling across deep water, riding on the back of a tortoise with the Sixth Patriarch. When Shitou woke up, he interpreted the dream this way: "The tortoise represents wisdom. The deep water is the sea of the nature of all that lives. So by means of wisdom I travelled with the Sixth Patriarch across this sea." Then Shitou wrote a poem called:

THE AGREEMENT OF DIFFERENCE AND UNITY

The mind of India's great sage
Was quietly confided from west to east.
People's abilities may be dull or sharp,
But in the Path, there are no
Southern or northern ancestors.
The spiritual source is bright and pure.
It flows and branches out imperceptibly.
To grasp at things is basically false,
But to concentrate only on principle
Isn't enlightening either.

The senses and sense-objects in all their aspects
May interact or not.
If so, they affect each other mutually;
If not, they just remain separate.
Colors differ naturally in quality and appearance;
Sounds can be pleasant or sad.
In the darkness, you can't tell up from down,
But when it's bright, you can tell
What's clean and what isn't.

The four elements follow their own nature
As a child follows its mother: fire heats, wind shakes,
Water moistens, and the earth remains firm.

There are colors for the eyes and sound for the ear,
Fragrances for the nose, salt and vinegar
for the tongue.
But according to the true law,
As leaves spread outward away from the trunk.
Whatever spreads out must come back to the source.
Thus "honorable" and "low-born" are nothing more
than words.

In light there is darkness,
but don't meet it as darkness.
In darkness there is light,
but don't see it as light.
Light and darkness are opposites,
Like forward and backward steps.
Each thing has its own function:
It's a question of how it is used.

Phenomena fit together like box and cover,
While principle impacts like an arrow
Meeting its target.
Hearing these words, you should understand
Their source—don't make up your own rules!
If you can't see the path in front of you,
How will you follow the Way?
Progress isn't measured by near or far,
But if you get lost,
Mountains and rivers will separate you.

I humbly say to students of this profound teaching:
Don't waste time!

Many gods and spirits on South Mountain emerged to listen to Shitou's teachings. In the second year of Guang De, he was invited to teach at Liang Duan by his students, so that more people could have a chance to hear his Dharma teachings. He died in the sixth year of Zhen Yuan. A memorial tower was built for him at East Peak. It was named Jian Xiang pagoda—"Seeing the basic principle."

The Jian Xiang pagoda, erected as a memorial tower after Shitou's death in 790, is today a pile of rubble, overgrown by bushes and thorns. It lies about half a kilometer down the side of the mountain from South Peak Temple, just inside a Chinese military reservation, which was used in recent decades as a missile base. Shitou's body was mummified in black lacquer and placed in a burial urn inside the pagoda. Damaged by fire, it was brought to Japan during the time of the Chinese Revolution (1911), and it may be viewed today at the Soto zen temple Soji-ji in Yokohama.

In *Zu Tang Ji*, (Collection from the Hall of Ancestors), which appeared in 952 CE as the first of the important Song-period chan histories, three additional stories about Shitou are included:

When Shitou was born, the room was filled with a strange light. His parents were surprised and consulted a witch for an explanation. The witch said it was a good sign. Shitou was gentle and handsome-looking, but with a square face and big ears, thereby distinguishing himself from ordinary children. When he had grown older, he was taken to a temple to see an image of Buddha. His mother told him to bow down and said, "This is Buddha." After bowing down before the figure, Shitou looked at it for some time and said, "This is only a human being. If he is called a Buddha, then I want to be one too." People standing around were surprised at such talk.

When Shitou had arrived at Nantai Temple, a monk saw him and went to tell Monk Rang. "The young man who came to ask you some questions recently and who was very impolite is now sitting and meditating on a rock over to the east of here." "Really?" "Yes, indeed."

Then Rang told his attendant, "Go over to the east side of the mountain and tell him that a person of such firm intention would also be welcome over on this side." The attendant delivered the message. Shitou answered, "I don't care how often you ask me, I am <u>not</u> coming over to your side of the mountain!"

The attendant returned with the answer. Rang said, "Nobody will ever get the better of this man."

Huai Rang was a student of Huineng and is called the "Seventh Patriarch" in some lineages. It is recorded that he was a teacher and abbot of a temple about a half-mile away from Shitou's temple,

at the time Shitou arrived on South Mountain. Today there is a stone tablet indicating the location of Huai Rang's temple.

Shitou was digging weeds in the garden with Deng Yinfeng when suddenly they saw a snake. Shitou handed Deng the spade and told him to kill the snake. Deng took the spade, but then hesitated. Shitou took back the spade and chopped the snake in half. He said to Deng, "If you don't understand birth-and-death, how can you understand Buddhism?" Then Shitou started weeding again. Deng asked, "You can pull up these weeds, but can you uproot [can you understand fully] **birth-and-death?" The master handed the spade to Deng, who pointed it at Shitou and made a threatening gesture. Shitou said, "You pull up roots only one way** [you understand only one half of birth-and-death]**."**

Shitou Xiqian and Qingyuan Xingsi

Huineng died at Cao Xi in 713, leaving behind more than forty Dharma successors. Many of them seem to have withdrawn into the mountains, forsaking life and teaching careers in the established chan monasteries, which would not have been numerous in those early times. But two of Huineng's disciples handed down mind-to-mind Dharma transmission from the Sixth Patriarch to the two leading ancestors of all the surviving chan schools in China. The first, Nanyue Huaizhang (677-744), became the teacher of Mazu, while Qingyuan Xingsi (660-740), who taught at Qingyuan Mountain (monastery) in Jiangxi, appointed Shitou Xiqian his Dharma successor in 740.

Not much is written about Qingyuan in the Song-period chan histories, although *Jingde chuan deng lu* does state specifically that he was the foremost student of Huineng. This has led some historians to speculate that Qingyuan was invented by the Song historians to document an authentic lineage between Shitou's successors and Huineng. But it could be equally true that simply not much was known of him. In any event, the biography and record of Qingyuan present some important information about Shitou Xiqian. Especially interesting is the circumstance that Shitou, who would have left Huineng as a boy at the age of 13, is shown in this text to be already clearly awakened, so that Qingyuan's purpose is just to test his understanding and to give him Dharma succession.

As the Sixth Patriarch lay dying, a young monk named Xiqian asked, "Who will I go to after you die?" The Sixth Patriarch said, "You'll have to answer that question by yourself."

After his death, Shitou sat quietly in meditation, as if it were he who had died. The head monk said to him, "The Master's gone, why keep sitting?" Shitou said, "It's what he told me to do." The head monk said, "Your teacher is now Xingsi, who lives at Qingyuan. He'll instruct you from now on—you'll only get confused if you stay here by yourself." Shitou accepted the advice, bowed to the remains of the Sixth Patriarch, and left for Qingyuan Monastery.

Qingyuan asked Shitou where he had come from. Shitou said from Cao Xi. Qingyuan asked, "What have you brought with you?" Shitou replied, "I had everything I needed before I went to Cao Xi." Qingyuan said, "If that's so, why did you go there?" Shitou answered, "If I hadn't gone there, how would I have known it?"

Shitou asked Qingyuan, "Did you know the master of Cao Xi?" Qingyuan said, "Do you know me?" Shitou said, "If I knew you, would I understand you?" Qingyuan said, "I have many cows with horns, but just one unicorn." [Qingyuan says that he has many students, but Shitou is unique among them.]

Then Shitou asked, "When did you get here after leaving Cao Xi?" Qingyuan said, "I don't remember leaving Cao Xi." Shitou said, "I didn't obey the master of Cao Xi by coming here." Qingyuan said, "I know perfectly well where you came from [i.e., from emptiness]**." Shitou said, "It's fortunate for me that you have this understanding."**

Later, Qingyuan again asked Shitou where he had come from. Shitou replied, "From Cao Xi." Qingyuan held up his whisk and asked, "Does something like this exist also in Cao Xi?" Shitou said, "Nothing like this exists in all of India, let alone in Cao Xi." "You haven't been to India, so how would you know?" "If I had been to India, then it would exist," Shitou retorted. Qingyuan said, "Something like this never existed to begin with. Explain it to me further." Shitou said, "You should explain some of it yourself and not rely totally on me." Qingyuan said, "It's not that I won't speak on your behalf—it's just that nobody would understand what I'm talking about."

Qingyuan holds up a ceremonial whisk, usually made of white horsehair attached to a wooden handle, carried by a temple abbot. This dialogue is commented upon extensively by the Japanese Soto master Keizan (1268-1325) in *Dentoroku* (Transmission of Light). The sense of the story is this: Qingyuan tries to trap Shitou into forgetting the true nature of phenomena. In Cao Xi as in India, nothing exists essentially except emptiness. But Shitou won't be tricked into making a dualistic statement about emptiness, which of course isn't possible to begin with—unless Qingyuan goes first!

Qingyuan asked Shitou to take a letter to Huaizhang at Nanyue. "You must return quickly after you deliver the letter. I have an axe to give you when you lead your own temple." Shitou went to present Qingyuan's letter to Huaizhang, but first he asked him, "What is it like when teachers are no longer needed, but one's own understanding hasn't been recognized?" Master Huaizhang said, "That's really a difficult question, can't you ask something simpler?" Shitou said, "Even if I were reborn endlessly, I couldn't reach liberation by following teachers." Huaizhang was silent and Shitou returned to Qingyuan.

Qingyuan said, "You weren't gone very long. Did you deliver my message?" Shitou said, "No message was delivered and no news was communicated." Qingyuan said, "What do you mean by that?" Shitou reported what he had done and then told Qingyuan, "You said you would give me an axe when I leave here: go get it for me now." Qingyuan got up from his seat. Shitou Xiqian bowed down and left at once for South Mountain.

An axe is a symbol of authority in China. Possibly a ceremonial implement of some sort is meant. The "teachers" mentioned here are more like spiritual authorities or experts—the Chinese word is sometimes translated as "sages" in English, or even "saints."

Qingyuan appointed Shitou Xiqian as his Dharma successor. On December 13th in the 28th year of Kai Yuan [740 CE], **he took his place in the lecture hall, sat in meditation posture and announced his departure. The Emperor Xi Zong granted him the posthumous name Hong Ji (Great Benefit). His memorial tower was named "Returning to the Truth."**

Jing de chuan deng lu then gives two further teacher-student dialogues with Qingyuan Xingsi:

When Shenhui of Ho Chen came to study with Qingyuan, the Master asked where he was coming from, and Shenhui said from Cao Xi. " "What's new in Cao Xi?" asked Qingyuan. When Shenhui remained silent, Qingyuan said, "Tiles and pebbles are still in your way." Shenhui asked, "Do you have some true gold to give to others?" Qingyuan said, "Even if I had some, how would you hold on to it?"

Once a monk asked, "What is the main teaching of Buddhism?" Qingyuan replied, "What is the price of rice in Luling?"

Shitou Xiqian and his Disciples

Shitou was a Dharma teacher for at least 26 years. He had many noteworthy disciples, whose biographies also appear in the chan histories of the Song period. Since these often include dialogues with Shitou, they also provide us with more knowledge about Shitou's teachings.

Changzi Kuang

Changzi returned to Shitou after paying a formal visit to the Sixth Patriarch's memorial pagoda at Cao Xi. Shitou asked, "Where are you coming from?" Changzi said, "From Lingnan." "Did you do everything you were supposed to in Lingnan?" "I did everything I was supposed to do, but I could use some further understanding." Shitou, "Would you like some now?" "Please." Shitou kicked him. Changzi bowed down before him. Shitou said, "What did you see just now that made you bow down in front of me?" Changzi said, "From my position, your action affected me like snow upon a red hot stove."

Shitou asks Changzi if he has performed all the steps necessary for a formal pilgrimage to Cao Xi, Huneng's temple in Lingnan, the area south of Hunan Province. When Shitou kicks him—the Chinese says literally "sticks out his foot," so this might mean only that he was sitting cross-legged and moved one foot outwards, or something similar—Changzi says his action was like snow hitting a hot stove. This might mean that he suddenly a gained a clear

understanding, or that Shitou's action melted his ignorance. The Chinese saying, "Snow melts, ice thaws," means that someone understands something.

Jingzhao Shili

Jingzhao Shili asked Shitou, "What are Buddhist monks supposed to do?" Shitou said, "What are you asking me for?" Jingzhao said, "If I don't ask you, where can I find what I'm looking for?" Shitou, "Are you sure you really lost it?" Jingzhao understood.

Zhaoti Huilang

Zhaoti Huilang asked Shitou, "What is the Buddha?" Shitou said, "You don't have Buddha's mind." Zhaoti said, "I'm a human being, I run around and have ideas." Shitou said, "People who are active and have ideas also have Buddha's mind." Zhaoti said, "Then why don't I have Buddha's mind?" "Because you're not willing to remain a human being." Zhaoti awakened.

Just by asking a question about Buddha, Zhaoti had already separated himself from Buddha's mind. When Shitou says that Zhaoti doesn't have the mind of Buddha, Zhaoti protests that he necessarily has it, since all persons have the mind of Buddha, and he is a person too. But if Zhaoti really understood that the ordinary mind is Buddha's mind, he wouldn't have needed to ask what Buddha is, as if it were something apart from himself. He should have been to content to remain a human being instead of trying to be like Buddha.

Danxia Tianrang

Danxia Tianrang approached Shitou with his hand raised to his hat [indicating he had a question]. **Shitou said, "Go the stables** [and do some work before I answer you]**." Danxia bowed and went to the hall for untonsured monks. There he worked as a cook for three years. One day Shitou said to all the monks, "Tomorrow we'll pull up some weeds in front of the Buddha Hall."**

The next day, the monks were digging up weeds with their spades. But Danxia Tianran filled a basin with water, wet his hair and knelt down before Shitou. Shitou laughed and shaved off his hair, and then he instructed him in the monastic discipline. [Danxia understood removing weeds to mean shaving his beard, thereby becoming a monk. Perhaps Shitou was also testing to see who might become a disciple.]

Dadian Baotong

When Dadian Baotong first met Shitou, Shitou asked him, "Can you show me your mind?" Dadian said, "That which distinguishes your words is my mind." Shitou started shouting at him and drove him away. Ten days later, Dadian approached Shitou said, "If what I said last time wasn't my mind, then what is it?" Shitou said, "Without raising your eyebrows or blinking your eyelids, show me your mind." Dadian said, "I don't have any other mind to show you." Shitou, "Originally you do have a mind, so why say you don't? If you deny it, it's the same as lying." Dadian understood.

Some time later when Dadian Baotong was standing nearby, Shitou asked, "Are you the kind of monk who is serious about Buddhism, or are you the kind of monk who hangs around all day?" Dadian said, "I'm the first kind."

Shitou said, "What is chan?" Dadian said, "Raising your eyebrows or blinking your eyelids." Shitou said, "Show me your original face without raising your eyebrows or blinking your eyelids." Dadian said, "You show me." Shitou: "I just did." Dadian said: "I did it too." Shitou said, "You just said you showed me your mind. Tell me what this mind of yours is like." Dadian said, "My mind is just like your mind." Shitou said, "My mind has nothing at all to do with your mind." Dadian said, "Originally nothing exists." Shitou: "In that case, you don't have an original face." Dadian said, "Emptiness is the real state of things." Shitou: "In that case, phenomena can't be grasped. This is the correct understanding, and you should try to remember that."

Later, Dadian Baotong had his own monastery, and students came from all directions to study with him.

Tianhuang Daowu

Tianhuang Daowu asked Shitou, "Besides concentrating upon the mind (*ding*) **and upon wisdom** *(hui)*, **what else do you have to teach us?" Shitou said, "I don't limit you to mind and wisdom** [so that you'll be able to reach some additional understanding on your own]**." Tianhuang said, "Then how can I understand it?" Shitou said, "Can you grasp emptiness?" Tianhuang said, "If you're going to talk like this, I won't discuss it with you today. I'm leaving." Shitou said, "At first I didn't think you were coming from there** [meaning from a state of emptiness]**, but now I know it." Tianhuang said, "I didn't come from there." Shitou said, "I knew that before you got here." Tianhuang said, "Why are you insulting me?" Shitou said, "Actually you did come here from there." Tianhuang said, "How can we teach others after us?" Shitou said, "Who do you suppose is going to come after us?" Tianhuang awakened.**

Huineng was famous for his teaching of *ding* and *hui,* meditation and wisdom. In the Platform Sutra, Huineng says: "Good friends, my teaching of the Dharma takes meditation and prajna as its basis." The point that Shitou is making is that Tianhuang shouldn't insist on some traditional philosophical teaching, but should realize emptiness in daily living.

Wu Xie

The following incident occurred. When Wu Xie was with Shitou, he said, "If you can say something useful, I'll stay. If not, I'm leaving." Shitou started to sit down, and Wu Xie started to leave. Shitou called out to him. Wu Xie turned around. Shitou said, "From birth to death, nothing else exists. Why do you keep searching?" Wu Xie awakened and broke his walking staff.

Wu Xie was a teacher of Dongshan, in Mazu's lineage. This dialogue is taken from the *Record of Dongshan Liangjie*.

In addition to *The Agreement of Difference and Unity*, another famous poem is attributed to Shitou Xiqian in *Jingde Chuan Deng Lu*. The poem describes the meditation hut which Shitou built for himself on a large rock next to South Peak Temple.

SONG OF THE GRASS SHACK

I've built a grass shack with nothing of value inside.
After a good meal, I like to take a nice nap.
The grass thatching still looks new;
When it wears out, I'll add fresh thatch to the roof.
The person inside the shack is always present,
But you won't find him inside or out.
He doesn't hang out with worldly people,
And he doesn't like the things they like.
This little shack contains the entire universe,
And my physical body is integrated with it.

Great Bodhisattvas don't doubt my ideas,
Although humans may think them strange.
If you say that my hut looks shabby, I'll answer
That the One Mind abides right where it is.
East or west, north or south,
A solid foundation is what counts.
With green pines hanging over the roof
And bright windows in the walls, not even
A royal palace can compare with my shack.
With a monk's robe over my shoulders
And a hood over my head, I've got no worries at all.

It's not that I praise myself for living here,
Like some merchant pushing his product.
It's just that when the twilight comes,
My mind is limitless from front to back.

When I met my teacher and heard his words,
I decided to build myself a hut and live in it.
Disregarding social constraints,
I'll do just as I please.

Still, whatever people will tell you,
My real goal is to wake folks up.
If you want to meet the "person" in the shack,
You've got to look after the physical side first.

The symbolic quality of the poem is really remarkable. Shitou says that his grass shack contains the entire universe, and he identifies it with his own body. If you want to "wake up," if you want to discover the "person" (Buddha-mind) in the material universe, you must first attend to the body or physical self; i.e., study the true nature of phenomena (emptiness).

The Record of Yaoshan Weiyan

Master Yaoshan's family name was Han. He was born in Jiangzhou [in modern Wenxi County, Shanxi County]. **At the age of 17, he studied with Master Huizhao, and then he was instructed by Xi Cao in the Buddhist discipline. He was conversant with the classic works of Buddhism and he followed the monastic discipline strictly. One day he sighed, "I'm just a human. I can't be confined by all these monastic rules. I should be able to resolve my problems by myself. There's no point in doing every little thing according to all the specific rules."**

When Yaoshan first called on Shitou, he said: "I know a little about the Buddhist sutras. I've heard that the southern school [meant is the school of Mazu in Jiangxi Province] **points directly to people's minds so they can become Buddhas. I don't understand this and hope you can explain it." Shitou said, "It makes no difference if I explain or not, you'll never understand it. The situation is hopeless." Yaoshan was confused. Shitou said, "Our ways of understanding are different, so I think you should go see Master Mazu."**

Yaoshan went to Mazu and asked the same question. Mazu said, "Sometimes I ask a person to raise his eyebrows and blink his eyelids, sometime I don't. Sometimes it's right and sometimes it isn't. There's nothing that can be done." Yaoshan awakened and bowed to Mazu, who asked why he was bowing and what he had understood. Yaoshan said, "When I was with Shitou I was like a mosquito trying to bite an iron ox." Mazu said, "If it's like that, then guard it well."

Three years later, Mazu asked Yaoshan, "What is your understanding these days?" He answered, "The blinders have fallen way, I see only the truth." Mazu said, "Your new understanding is very good. You have wholly grasped the essence: it's spread through your arms and legs. Having this understanding, you can buckle up your belt and establish your own monastery." "I don't dare set up a school of my own. I'm an unimportant person." Mazu said, "No, people should travel around for awhile and then settle down." [Monks should study at different monasteries and later stay somewhere to teach.] **"You can't always do what you want to do, just as you can't always get what you want. You should be like a floating boat. You mustn't stay here longer." Yaoshan left Mazu and went back to Shitou.**

One day Yaoshan was sitting on a stone. Shitou asked what he was doing. Yaoshan said he wasn't doing anything. Shitou said, "You're just sitting here?" Yaoshan said, "Just sitting doing nothing is doing something." Shitou asked, "What exactly do you mean by 'doing nothing?" Yaoshan said, "If you asked all the sages, they wouldn't be able to tell you." Then Shitou recited a poem:

A person doesn't know how it works,
Just goes along with it naturally.
All the sages in history can't explain it,
And ordinary people don't understand it either.

Shitou composes a poem to approve Yaoshan's understanding. There are four lines of seven characters in each line, with a rhyme scheme of A,A,B,A.

Sometime later, Shitou taught: "This ordinary mind isn't expressed by words and ideas." Yaoshan said, "No words and no ideas also have nothing to do with this ordinary mind." Shitou said, "You can't penetrate this further." Yaoshan said,

"I'm like a flower growing on a rock." [Shitou says literally, "You can't penetrate me." "Rock" of course is also Shitou's name.] **Shitou agreed.**

Later, Yaoshan became the leader of a monastery in Lizhou [in Hunan Province]. **Many students came to study with him. One day Yaoshan said to Daowu, "Shaoxi Mingxi** [a student of Mazu] **used to be a government official in his previous life." Daowu asked, "What did you used to do in your last life?" Yaoshan said, "I was very weak in my last life, nothing at all important." Daowu asked why and Yaoshan said, "In my last life I didn't study hard."**

The temple supervisor said, "The bell is ringing now, so please come to the assembly hall." Yaoshan said to him, "Please bring my eating bowl." Yunyan said to Yaoshan, "Master Yaoshan doesn't use his own hands and feet. How long have you been here?" Yaoshan said to Yunyan, "It's a mistake for you to be wearing a monk's robe." Yunyan said, "I agree, but what about you?" Yaoshan said, "I haven't anything attached." [There's nothing added on to from the outside, such as hands and feet. In other words, Yaoshan has no outside attachments.]

Then he told Yunyan to call the attendant for him. Yunyan asked why. Yaoshan said, "I've got a pot with one leg broken, so I want him to hold up the leg for me." [Yaoshan has a vessel with three legs, one of which is broken, so the attendant will have to stand there and keep the pot from falling over.] **Yunyan said, "I'll give you just my one hand; you don't need a whole hand and body for this purpose." Yaoshan gave the whole thing up.**

On another occasion, after the gardener had finished planting some vegetables. Yaoshan said, "The earth can't stop you from planting vegetables... can you stop the vegetables from taking root?" The gardener said, "What will people have to eat if the vegetables don't take root?" Yaoshan said,

"You still have a mouth, don't you?" The gardener didn't know what to say.

One day Daowu and Yunyan were out walking with Yaoshan, who pointed at two trees with his finger. One was healthy and the other was withered up. He asked Daowu, "Which is better, the withered tree or the healthy tree?" Daowu answered, "The healthy one is better." Yaoshan said, "So everything around it becomes bright and colorful." Then he asked Yunyan the same question. Yunyan said, "The withered tree is better." Yaoshan said, "So everything around it looks gray and withered up." An attendant named Gao appeared suddenly. Yaoshan asked him the same question. Gao said, "The withered one is withered and the healthy one is healthy." Yaoshan turned to Daowu and Yunyan and said, "You were both wrong."

Someone asked Yaoshan, "How can one avoid becoming confused by all kinds of outside appearances?" Yaoshan said, "Just leave them alone and they won't trouble you." The person said he didn't understand. Yaoshan said, "What outside appearances are troubling you right now?"

Someone asked Yaoshan, "What's the most important thing about Buddhist conduct?" Yaoshan said, "The main thing is not to flatter anyone." This person asked, "What would your mind be like if you never flattered anyone?" Yaoshan said, "Even if you were offered the entire country, your mind would never change."

A monk came back to see Yaoshan. Yaoshan asked his name. The monk said, "My name is Changtan." Yaoshan yelled, "You used to be Changtan and you'll always remain Changtan as well!" [Maybe Yaoshan means that Changtan hasn't made any progress while he was away.]

Yaoshan hadn't been to the lecture hall for a long time. The temple supervisor said, "We've all been looking forward to your giving us a lecture." Yaoshan said, "Ring the bell." As soon as the monks had gathered for the lecture, Yaoshan got up from his seat and went back to the abbot's quarters. The supervisor followed and asked why he didn't say anything, since he had agreed to speak to the monks. Yaoshan said, "They have teachers to teach them sutras and they have teachers to teach Abidhamma, so what is there left for me to do?"

One day Yaoshan asked Yunyan what he was doing. "I just eat and shit." [Literally: "I just bury shit."] **Yaoshan said, "Where is your real self?" Yunyan said, "It's right in front of you." Yaoshan: "For whom are you so busy?" Yunyan: "For my body, which eats and shits." Yaoshan: "Why not make the body and self fit together.?" Yunyan: "Don't get any false ideas about this body." Yaoshan: "Can't I put it this way?" Yunyan said, "It's ok with me." Yaoshan said, "Are you still just eating and shitting?"**

One day after Yaoshan had sat down, a monk came and asked, "What are you thinking about here by yourself?" "I'm thinking about not-thinking." "How can you think about not-thinking?" "By not thinking."

A student asked Yaoshan, "I've got to go home, is it ok?" Yaoshan said, "Your parents are lying in thorns, and their bodies are all red and swollen. Where are you going to go back to?" The student said, "If that's the way it is, I won't go home." Yaoshan said, "But you have to go home, and therefore I will show you how to live without food." The student said, "Please tell me." Yaoshan said, "When you come to the hall in the morning and evening, don't eat a single grain of rice."

Someone asked Yaoshan, "What is nirvana?" [Nirvana means here the state after death.] **Yaoshan said, "What was your name before you were born?"**

Yaoshan asked a monk, "Where are you from?" "From Hunan." Yaoshan asked, "Is Dongting Lake full of water?" The monk said no. The Yaoshan said, "Why isn't it full of water after so much rain?" The monk had nothing to say.

Yaoshan asked a monk, "Where are you coming from?" "From Jiangxi." Yaoshan struck his meditation seat three times with his stick. The monk said, "Now I know where I should go." Yaoshan lowered his stick and the monk was silent. Yaoshan called the attendant to give the monk some tea. He was very tired from having travelled such a long way.

Yaoshan asked Layman Pang, "Can there be such a thing as the One Vehicle?" Pang said, "Everyday I just feed myself and there's not much else to do." Yaoshan said, "Then if I said that you hadn't been to see Shitou Xiqian yet, would that be correct?" Pang said, "You like to pick up one thing and drop another [you like to change the subject of conversation] **— that really isn't very clever." Yaoshan said, "I've got to look after some abbot's affairs." Pang got up to leave. Yaoshan said, "Actually it's quite clever to pick up one thing and drop another." Pang said, "You were really very clever to ask me that question about the One Vehicle, and I admit I made a mistake today." Yaoshan said, "Yes, yes."**

There are three vehicles which can carry sentient beings to Buddha's enlightenment, one each for sravakas, pratyekas, and bodhisattvas. The Lotus Sutra indicates that these three vehicles (*triyana*), represented as carts driven by goats, reindeer and oxen, should be viewed together as one vehicle (*ekayana*).

Yaoshan, said, "The ancestors told us to protect ourselves so that the Three Poisons won't affect us. We should try to prevent them from developing. Don't touch them, don't allow them to arise. For example, if you want to know what a dead tree is, and you go ask Shitou Xiqian to tell you, you still won't pick any leaves or branches from the dead tree. Instead, it would be better to examine the dead tree by yourself, so you can form your own conclusions afterwards. I can say something, but it can't be explained in words. There's nothing for the eyes or ears."

Yaoshan and Yunyan were walking on a mountain. Yaoshan's sword made a noise at his side. Yunyan asked what was making the noise. Yaoshan drew his sword and struck the air with it.

A monk named Zun was cleaning the Buddha [maybe a Buddha figure on the altar]. **Yaoshan said, "Please continue to clean the Buddha. Can you clean the other one too?"** [Yaoshan means the Buddha inside the monk.] **Zun said, "Please bring it to me." Yaoshan was silent.**

A monk who was a teacher said to Yaoshan, "I've got a problem — can you help me with it?" Yaoshan said, "I'll solve it for you when I'm in the hall." [The meditation or sangha hall, sometimes also used for lectures.] **Later, in the hall, Yaoshan said, "Where is the monk who's got a problem?" The monk stepped out from the group. Yaoshan arose from his meditation seat, grasped the monk and said, "Everybody pay attention: this monk has a problem." Then Yaoshan pushed the monk aside and returned to the abbot's quarters.**

Yaoshan asked the head cook, "How long have you been here?" The cook answered, "Three years." Yaoshan said, "I don't know you." The cook went away, feeling puzzled and angry.

A person asked Yaoshan, "What should be done in case of an emergency?" Yaoshan said, "Don't turn your attention to other matters." The same person asked, "What should I lay upon this altar?" Yaoshan said, "Nothing."

Yaoshan ordered a monk to go collect some money. An attendant named Gan asked the monk where he came from. The monk said, "I'm here to spread Buddha's teaching." Gan asked, "Did you bring any medicine?" [The character *yao* means "medicine" and is the same character as in Yaoshan's name.] **The monk said, "What are you sick with?" Gan gave him two pieces of silver** [to bring him some medicine] **and thought to himself, if there's anyone intelligent on this mountain, the silver will be returned to me—if there isn't, I won't get it back.**

The monk returned to report to Yaoshan, who asked why he was back so soon. The monk said, "Somebody asked me about Buddha's teaching, so I answered his questions properly and was given two pieces of silver afterwards." Yaoshan asked him to repeat the exact words. When the monk had finished, Yaoshan said, "Send the silver back right away. This person has tricked you." So the monk brought back the money. Gan said, "There's a bright person somewhere around here after all," and then gave the monk some more silver.

Yaoshan asked a monk, "I hear that you're rather good at doing calculations, is that right?" [Casting a horoscope could be meant here.] **The monk said, "Maybe just a little." Yaoshan said, "You go ahead and calculate and let me watch for awhile." The monk didn't respond.**

Yaoshan drew the character for Buddha and asked Daowu what it was. Daowu said, "It's Buddha." Yaoshan said, "You talk too much."

A person asked Yaoshan, "I'm not quite clear about what I'm doing, so please give me some instruction." Then Yaoshan said, "It isn't difficult for me to say something, but

it's only good if you understand what I say just as soon as I finish saying it. If my words make you think further, it will be my mistake, so it's better if we both keep our mouths shut."

In the evening the monks were sitting in the hall, which was getting dark. Yaoshan said, "I've got something to tell you after the bull has given birth." A monk said, "Actually the bull already has given birth, but you just don't want to tell us anything. Yaoshan said, "Bring in some light [so Yaoshan could find out who the monk was]**." But the monk had already disappeared back into the group.**

Yaoshan asked a monk where he came from. "From Master Nanquan," was the answer. "How long were you there?" "About a year." "Then you've also become an ox." [Nanquan liked to describe himself as an ox, and said that he would be reborn as an ox after his death.] **The monk said, "Although I was at his temple, I didn't even enter the dining hall." Yaoshan said, "Did you have anything to drink besides the southeast wind?" The monk said, "Please don't misunderstand. Besides Nanquan, there were others who nourished me."**

Someone asked Yaoshan, "Before Bodhidharma came, did chan exist in this country?" Yaoshan said yes. "If so, why did the Ancestor come here?" Yaoshan said, "He came here precisely because chan existed in this country."

One day after Yaoshan had finished reading a sutra, a monk said, "You're always forbidding people to read the sutras, so why are you reading one now?" Yaoshan said, "I want to hide my eyes." [So I won't see anything—in other words, to stop thinking.] **The monk said, "What would you think if I behaved like you?" "When somebody like you reads the sutras, it's like trying to look through an ox's hide."** [The monk would be thinking about the contents of the sutra and not realizing their essence.]

A monk said to Yaoshan, "There's a large herd of deer on flat terrain without cover. How would you shoot the leader?" Yaoshan said, "Arrow!" [He pretends to pull out his bow and shoot a deer.] **The monk fell down to the ground. Yaoshan said, "Attendant, carry this dead person away." The monk left. Yaoshan said, "His situation is quite hopeless if he keeps playing these little tricks."**

The head official at Langzhou was Li Ao. He once asked Yaoshan, "What's your family name?" Yaoshan said, "It's the season right now." Li didn't understand and asked the temple supervisor. "Just now I inquired about the Master's family name and he said, 'the season right now.' I don't understand what his family name is." The temple supervisor said, "His family name is Han." [*Han* means "cold " in Chinese.] **When Yaoshan heard about it he said, "Why does he talk so much? From that point of view, if I answered his question in the summertime, would my name be Re?"** [*Re* means "hot" in Chinese.]

One evening Yaoshan was walking around the mountain when he saw the moon appear suddenly through the clouds. He shouted loudly, and the sound of his shout extended 90 li [30 miles] **to the east of Liyang City. The city residents asked their neighbors to the east if they'd heard the noise. The question circulated up to Yaoshan's temple. The students said, "It was the teacher who shouted last night at the top of the mountain." Li Ao wrote a poem for Yaoshan:**

Choosing a quiet place to live
Fits your wild character.
You don't have to welcome anyone or see them off.
Sometimes at the top of the mountain
You can shout under the moon and clouds!

On November 6th in the eighth year of Tai He [834 CE], when Yaoshan was dying, he suddenly shouted, "Now the meditation hall is going to collapse!" The monks began looking around for wooden poles to support the structure. Yaoshan raised his hand and said, "No, no, you don't understand," and then he died.

His memorial tower was built on the east side of the temple. The Tang Emperor Wenzong granted him the posthumous name Hong Dao—"Great Master." The pagoda was called Hua Cheng—"A Place for the Teaching."

The Record of Yunyan Tansheng

Chan Master Yunyan Tansheng of Tanzhou was born to a family named Wang in Jianchang at Zhongling. He became a monk at Shimen Temple when he was quite young and practiced chan with Master Baizhang Huaihai. Twenty years later, since he had no affinity with Baizhang, he left for Yaoshan's temple.

Tanzhou is an older name for Changsha, the present capital of Hunan Province. Zhongling is located in modern Jiangxi Province. Baizhang Huaihai (749-814) is one of the most famous of all Tang-period chan masters and is remembered mainly for his work on monastic rules for the chan school, which in later centuries became normative for Chinese Buddhism in general. He was a disciple of Mazu and became the teacher of Huang Po. It is remarkable to think that Dongshan Liangjie's teacher Yunyan studied with Baizhang for twenty years before turning to Yaoshan for transmission.

Yaoshan asked Yunyan where he had come from. Yunyan answered from Baizhang. Yaoshan asked what Baizhang usually said to his students. Yunyan answered, "He often said, 'I've got a sentence which includes all tastes.'" [I can state a proposition which contains all meanings.]

Yaoshan said, "Salty is salty, plain is plain, neither salty nor plain is the way things taste normally. How can there be a sentence which contains all tastes?" Yunyan couldn't respond. Yaoshan said, "How can we deal with the problem of life and death?" Yunyan said, "I haven't studied this yet." Yaoshan asked,

"How long did you stay with Baizhang?" Yunyan said 20 years. Then Yaoshan said, "After 20 years with Baizhang you still haven't given up your conventional views."

"The 'one taste' means that there is no attachment, no contamination, no purity, no nihilism, no eternalism, no arising, no cessation, no grasping, no abandoning, no self, and no sensation." (Garma Chang, *A Treasury of Mahayana Sutras*, Maharatnakuta Sutra, "Manjusri's Attainment of Buddhahood," p. 172.)

Sometime later, Yaoshan asked what else Baizhang had said. Yunyan answered, "Sometimes he told me that I should think only about what is beyond the Three Propositions." [The Three Propositions are: to give up thinking about existence, to give up thinking about non-existence, and to give up thinking about existence and nonexistence.] **Yaoshan said, "It's a good thing I'm 3,000 li away from Baizhang and don't have to deal with him."**

Sometime later, Yaoshan asked Yunyan what else Baizhang had said to him. Yunyan answered, "Once in the lecture hall, when all the monks were standing there, the master drove us out with his walking stick. Then he called us back and asked, "What is this?" Yaoshan said, "Why didn't you tell me this before? Now I'm really getting to understand Master Huaihai." Hearing this, Yaoshan suddenly awakened and bowed down before Yaoshan.

On another day, Yaoshan asked, "Where else have you been besides with Baizhang?" Yunyan said, "I've been to some places in Guangnan and Guangxi." Yaoshan said, "I heard once that there was a big stone outside the east gate of Guangzhou city, which was eventually removed by order of the mayor, is that true?" Yunyan answered, "It couldn't be removed by all the efforts of all the people in all the country, let alone by the mayor."

Yaoshan again asked, "You know how to perform the lion's dance, don't you?" Yunyan said yes. "How many different styles can you perform?" Yunyan answered six. Yaoshan said, "I can do it too." Yunyan asked, "How many kinds can you do?" Yaoshan said, "Just one." Yunyan said, "Six is one, and one is six."

The lion-dance is as popular today as it was in Yunyan's times; it is performed at Chinese New Year's and other festivals. Two or three persons dressed in a lion's costume with an oversized lion's head chase through the streets, pretending to bite the bystanders. Being "bitten" by the lion brings good fortune. The logic of this dialogue is that since all things are empty, and since emptiness is characterized by thusness, all numbers are therefore equal.

Later, Yunyan went to see Weishan. Weishan asked, "I heard you performed the lion's dance at Yaoshan's place last night, is that true?" Yunyan said, "That's right." Weishan said, "Did you perform it without stopping, or did you take a break sometimes?" Yunyan said, "When I felt like dancing, I danced, and when I felt like stopping, I stopped." Weishan asked, "When it was over, what happened to the lion?" Yunyan said, "Gone, gone."

A monk asked, "What ever became of the ancient sages?" Yunyan said after a long pause, "What did you say?" The monk said, "What should we do with someone who is as oblivious as a dead person?" Yunyan said, "Bury him." The monk asked again, "Is it like that with highly realized persons?" Yunyan asked, "Is the silk woven from the same loom one piece or two?"

Yunyan was boiling some tea. Daowu asked who he was making it for. Yunyan answered, "Nobody special." Daowu said, "Why doesn't he go make it for himself?" Yunyan said, "It's a good thing that I'm here."

Yunyan asked Shishuang, "Where have you come from?" "From Weishan." Yunyan asked, "How long were you there?" Shishuang said, "One year." Yunyan said, "So you could have become the head of the monastery." Shishuang said, "Although I was there, I didn't learn anything." Yunyan said, "Weishan didn't learn anything either." Shishuang had nothing to say.

Yunyan was speaking to everyone in the lecture hall. "Once there was a son in a family who could answer any question that was put to him." Dongshan Liangjie stepped forward and asked, "How many books of the Chinese classics did these people have in their house?" Yunyan said, "Not a single word." Dongshan said, "Then how could the son become so educated?" Yunyan said, "He didn't sleep nights." Dongshan asked, "Can you answer me if I ask you a question?" Yunyan said, "I could, but I'm not going to."

Yunyan asked a monk, "Where have you been?" The monk replied, "I was just putting on some more incense." Yunyan asked, "Did you see Buddha?" "Yes, I did." "Where did you see him?" The monk said, "In the human world." Yunyan praised him: "You're just like the ancient Buddhas."

Daowu asked, "The God of Compassion has thousands of eyes—which is the most important one?" Yunyan said, "It's like when a person reaches out for his pillow in the middle of the night." Daowu said, "I understand." Yunyan asked, "What do you understand?" Daowu said, "There are eyes all over one's body." Yunyan replied, "You said that so directly that you are only 80% correct." Daowu said, "How do you understand this?" Yunyan said, "There are eyes all over one's body."

Avalokitesvara, the bodhisattva of infinite compassion, has many arms to help people and also many eyes to see their needs. He helps them instinctively and spontaneously, as a person might adjust his pillow at night while remaining asleep.

Yunyan was sweeping the floor. Daowu said, "What you're doing is such a menial task." Yunyan said, "One should see it as something very important." Daowu said, "You might as well suppose that there are two moons." Yunyan held up his broom and said, "Which moon is this?" Daowu walked off.

Daowu tries unsuccessfully to give Yunyan another lesson in non-duality. Dividing phenomena into opposites, for example "important" and "unimportant," would be like dividing the moon in two.

Yunyan asked a monk what he was doing. The monk replied, "I've been talking to a rock." Yunyan said, "Did it nod to you [did it understand what you were saying]**?" When the monk didn't reply, Yunyan answered for him: "It nodded to you before you even said anything."**

Yunyan was weaving a pair of straw shoes. Dongshan came up and said, "May I borrow your eyes?" Yunyan said, "Who did you lend yours to?" Dongshan said, "I don't have any eyes." Yunyan then asked, "Isn't it your eyes which are borrowing your eyes?" When Dongshan said no, Yunyan told him to get out.

A monk asked, "What if I fell into an evil world because of desire?" Yunyan asked, "What makes you think you're in the Buddhist world?" The monk didn't answer. Yunyan asked if he had understood. The monk said he hadn't. Yunyan said, "Even if you had, you'd still be wandering between the evil world and the Buddhist world." [You'd still be lost in duality.]

On the 26th day of the tenth month in the first year of the Hui Chang Emperor [December, 841 CE], **Yunyan fell ill. In the night of the next day, he passed away.**

More Information

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Cao-Dong Lineage Chart

Sixth Patriarch to Dongshan Liangjie

HUINENG
The Sixth Patriarch
Enō
683-713 CE

QINGYUAN XINGSI
Seigen Gyōshi
660-740

SHITOU XIQIAN
Sekito Kisen
700-790

YAOSHAN WEIYAN
Yakūsan Igen
ca. 745-828

YUNYAN TANSHENG
Ungan Donjō
780-841

DONGSHAN LIANGJIE
Tōzan Ryōkai
807-869

Notes on Shitou Xiqian's "The Agreement of Difference and Unity"

Can tong qi, the Chinese title of Shitou's poem, is also the title of a well-known Han-period treatise by the Taoist philosopher, Wei Bo Yang. According to *Ci Hai* (Sea of Words), a kind of Chinese encyclopedic dictionary published 1948 in Shanghai, *Can tong qi* in Wei Bo Yang's title means "Three (Things) Combined Agree(s) with [the Great Tao]." The Three Things indicated are the *I Jing* (Book of Changes); Taoism (the philosophical teachings of Laozi and Chuangzi); and Taoist alchemy. Shitou Xiqian would likely have been familiar with this celebrated classical work by Wei Bo Yang, but because there is no triadic conceptual structure articulated in Shitou's poem, the title must have meant something different for him, which we can now only infer from the text. For example, one traditional (but highly inferential) interpretation is "The Different [Schools, or Teachings of Buddhism] Combined into One." This takes Shitou's statement that in the Buddhist path, there are no Southern or Northern ancestors—in other words, the Southern and Northern chan schools derive from the same source—as the central idea of the whole poem.

Another possibility is to read the Chinese characters as follows: "The Different Things (*Can*) are Combined with *(qi)* Unity *(tong)*." This does not mean that many different things unite to form one thing, but rather that different things are identical with unity itself: the one and the many are the same. Thus Shunryu Suzuki-roshi, in his Sandokai lectures, translates *Can tong qi* as: "The Oneness of One and Many."

We might also read "different things" and "unity" as the relative and absolute, or, in the context of Huayan mysticism, as phenomena and principle, *li* and *shi*, clearly a major theme of the poem. From this point of

view, one might translate *Can tong qi* as "The Identity of Principle and Phenomena."

Since the references in Shitou's poem to Huineng's Platform Sutra are very numerous, we will list the relevant verses here:

1. *The mind of India's great sage*
Was quietly confided from west to east.

In Yampolsky, *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch*, p. 153: "But from the past, the Dharma has been handed down in silence." The biography of Huineng in *Jingde chuan deng lu* also says: "The mysterious principle of all the Buddhas has nothing to do with words," (*op cit.*, p. 79).

2. *People's abilities may be dull or sharp,*
But in the path, there are no southern
Or northern ancestors.

Platform Sutra, p. 137: "Good friends, in the Dharma, there is no sudden and gradual, but among people some are keen and others are dull." Also p. 127: "Although people from the south and people from the north differ, there is no north and south in Buddha-nature."

3. *To grasp at things is basically false,*
But to concentrate only on principle
Isn't enlightenment either.

Platform Sutra, p. 172: "If you cling to emptiness then you will only be increasing your ignorance." See also p. 146: "Do not sit with a mind fixed on emptiness. If you do, you will fall into a neutral kind of emptiness. Emptiness includes the sun, moon, stars, and planets, the great earth, mountains and rivers, all trees and grasses, bad men and good men, heaven and hell; they are all in the midst of emptiness."

4. But according to the true law,
As leaves spread outwards away from the trunk,
Whatever spreads out must come to the source.

Platform Sutra, p. 85: "When leaves fall they return to the root." The same image appears in the Dunhuang manuscripts, for example in Bodhidharma's *Treatise on Contemplating Mind*: "Mind is the root of the myriad phenomena. All phenomena are born from mind. It is like a great tree: all the branches and flowers and fruits grow based on the root." (Trans. J. C. Cleary, *Zen Dawn*, p. 81.)

5. Light and dark are opposites,
Like forward and backward steps.

Platform Sutra, p.82: "The nature of light and darkness is not two. The non-dual nature is thus the real nature." Cf. further p. 173: "Darkness is not darkness by itself; because there is light there is darkness. That darkness is not darkness by itself is because light changes, becoming darkness, and with darkness light is revealed. They originate from each other."

6. The senses and sense-objects in all their aspects
May respond to each other or not.
If so, they affect each other mutually;
If not, they just remain separate.

The Chinese characters in the second line are *hui hu bu hui hu*. "*Can tong qi*... was clearly built upon the *I Ching* and made explicit use of the *hui-hu* paradigms." (Whalen W. Lai, in his essay "Sinitic mandalas: The *Wu-wei-t'u* of Ts'ao-shan," in Lancaster and Lai: *Early Ch'an in China and Tibet, p. 230.*)

7. Thus "honorable" and "lowborn" are nothing more
Than words.

The same terms appear in the title of Dongshan Liangjie's "Gatha of the Essentials," translated by W.F. Powell in *The Record of T'ung-shan,* p. 66:

ON NOT FALLING INTO DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN "SAGELY" AND "COMMON"

Principle and phenomena have no relation to each other;
Reflected light cuts through dark mystery.
Ignoring the wind, with neither skill nor incompetence,
The lightning bolt is impossible to escape.

8. Phenomena fit together like box and cover,
While principle impacts like an arrow meeting its target.

Principle *(li,* meaning emptiness) merges so perfectly with phenomena that you can't really separate them, just as there is no distance left between a target and the arrow which struck it.

PINYIN TO WADE-GILES ROMANIZATION TABLE

Baizhang Huaihai	Po-ch'ang Huai-hai
Baojing sanmei ke	P'ao-ching san-mei ko
Can tong qi	Ts'an t'ung ch'i
Cao an ge	Ts-ao-an ko
Cao-Dong zong	Ts'ao-T'ung tsung
Caoshan Benji	Ts'ao-shan Pen-chi
Cao Xi	Ts'-ao hsi
chan	ch'an
Changsha	Ch'ang-sha
Changtan	Ch'ang-t'an
Changzi Kuang	Ch'ang-tsu K'uang
Chen	Ch'en
Dadian Baotong	Ta-t'ien Pao-t'ung
Danxia Tianran	Tan-hsia T'ien-jan
Daowu	Tao-wu
Deng Yinfeng	Teng Yin-feng
Dongshan Liangjie	Tung-shan
Dongting	Tung-t'ing
Duan Zhou	Tuan Chou
Emei Shan	E-mei Shan
Fajie kuan men	Fa-chieh k'uan-men
Faju	Fa-chu
Fayan	Fa-yen
Fazang	Fa-tsang
Fo zu tong ji	Fo-tsu-t'ung-chi
Gao Yao	Kao Yao
gong an	kung-an
Guang De	Kuang Te
Guangdong	Kwangtung
Guangnan	Kwangnan
Guangxi	Kwangsi
Heshang	Hoshang
Hengshan	Heng Shan
Hoze	Ho-tse
Hong Dao	Hung Tao

Hongren	Hongjen
Hongzhi Zhengjue	Hung-chih Cheng-chueh
Hongzhou	Hung-chou
Hua Cheng	Hua Ch'eng
Huangpo	Huang-p'o
Huayan	Hua-yen
Huayan jing	Hua-yen ching
Hui Chang	Hui Ch'ang
Hui Ming	Hui Ming
Hui Zhao	Hui Chou
Huineng	Hui-neng
I Jing	I Ching
Jian Xiang	Chien Hsiang
Jiangxi	Kiangsi
Jiangzhou	Kiangchou
Jingde chuan deng lu	Ching-te ch'uan teng lu
Jingtu	Ching-t'u
Jingzhao Shili	Ching-chou Shih-li
Juizhou	Jui-chou
Kueifeng Zongmi	Kuei-feng Tsung-mi
Kuiyang	Kuie-yang
Langzhou	Langchou
Laozi	Lao-tse
Liang Duan	Lieng Tuan
Linji	Lin-chi
Liuzu tan jing	Liu-tsu t'an-ching
Lizhou	Lichou
Lofu Shan	Lofu Shan
Mazu	Ma-tsu
mo zhao chan	mo-chao ch'an
Nan tai si	Nan-t'ai-ssu
Nanquan	Nan-ch'uan
Nanyue Huaizhang	Nan-yueh Huai-jang
Niutou	Niu-t'ou
Pang	P'ang
Putuo Shan	P'u-tuo Shan
Pu Ji	P'u Chi
Qingyuan Xingsi	Ch'ing-yuan Hsing-ssu

Rujing	Ju-ching
Sengzhao	Sengchao
Shenhui	Shen-hui
Shenxiu	Shen-hsiu
Shimen Shan	Shih-men Shan
Shishuang	Shih-shuang
Shitou Xiqian	Shih-t'ou Hsi-ch'ien
Sichuan	Sechuan
Song Shan	Sung Shan
Tai He	T'ai He
Tang	T'ang
Tian Bao	T'ien Pao
Tianhuang Daowu	T'ien-huang Tao-wu
Tuxun	Tu-shun
Wansong Xingxui	Wan-sung Hsing-hsiu
Weishan	Wei-shan
Wei Bo Yang	Wei Po-yang
Wu Ai	Wu Ai
Wu Zhu	Wu Chu
Wumen Hukai	Wu-men Hu-k'ai
Wumen kuan	Wu-men K'uan
Wutai Shan	Wu-t'ai Shan
Wu Xie	Wu Hsieh
Wuzong	Wu Tsung
Xi Cao	Hsi T'sao
Xuanzang	Hsuan-tsang
Yaoshan Weiyan	Yaoshan Wei-yen
Yunmen	Yun-men
Yunyan Tansheng	Yün-yen T'an-sheng
Zhao Lun	Chao Lun
Zhaoti Huilang	Chao-ti Hui-lang
Zhejiang	Chekiang
Zhen Yuan	Chen Yuen
Zhiban	Chih-pan
Zhongling	Chung-ling
Zongmi	Tsung-mi
Zu tang ji	Tsu t'ang chi

INDEX OF BUDDHIST MONKS AND TEACHERS



On this rocky ledge next to South Peak Temple in Nanyue, Shitou Xiqian built a meditation hut and celebrated it in his poem, "Song of the Grass Shack."

SOTO ZEN ANCESTORS IN CHINA describes the development of Zen Buddhism in Tang-period China, and it presents the teachings of three Buddhist masters instrumental in the growth of the Cao-Dong School, one of the "Five Houses" of chan, later introduced to Japan by Master Dogen Zenji in the 13th century as Soto Zen.

The translations were made in 1989-1991 during James Mitchell's tenure as visiting professor at the Foreign Affairs Graduate College of the People's Republic of China, Beijing, with the indispensable assistance of Professor Yulie Lou, Chair of the Philosophy Department at Beijing University, after a careful examination and comparison of the Song-period chan histories. The prefatory essays and commentary were added later by James Mitchell after independent study at the University of California, Berkeley. He began Buddhist practice at San Francisco Zen Center in 1969.

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